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MEMOIRS

OF A

LADY IN WAITING.

Memoirs of a Lady in Waiting.

by

The Author of *Adventures of Mrs. Colonel Somerset*
in Caffraria, &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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MEMOIRS
OF
A LADY IN WAITING.

CHAPTER I.

" 'Twas ever thus—from childhood's hour
I've seen my fondest hopes decay;
I never loved a tree or flower,
But it was first to fade away."

MOORE.

A GREAT change had come over my feelings since I became acquainted with Alice Fenton. Many little troubles, that I had looked upon as real miseries, faded away under the gentle influence

of her patient teaching, and her experience of life banished the darker shadows of mine; proving to me that what I had imagined suffering, was in reality nothing but a little gloom in my own mind. Thus I began to be very much lighter-hearted than even before, and bore Lawrence's absent looks and forgetfulness without thinking myself so neglected as I had formerly done.

But troubles of another kind began to appear. Mr. Burnett had grown low-spirited, and entertained sad forebodings as to the fate of the country under the Romanist influence that was slowly and surely stealing into the council-chamber.

I noticed that more divines and teachers came to consult him than usual, and each visit added a shade to his already gloomy looks.

At this time, Lord Buckingham was in full favour; and, in spite of the openly-expressed hatred of the country, the infatuated King continued loading him with honours and wealth, following his advice in the most important matters, vieing with him in levity and recklessness.

Strange stories of the Queen, too, now reached me; not through Mr. Burnett, for he lately had scarcely found leisure to speak to me at all, but Margery heard the every-day reports floating about the town, and, with

many lamentations, and I dare say additions, retailed them for my amusement during my toilet.

For a long time her Majesty had withdrawn herself studiously from much of the questionable society the King allowed to rule the gaiety of Court, and had, it was said, much displeased and offended him by doing so. Now, however, a great change took place. She joined recklessly in everything that went on, enduring the constant presence, and even friendship, of my Lady Castlemaine and Mrs. Stewart.

I felt much for her when I heard this, blaming her not a little for submitting to such degradation and slights, which, it was said, these ladies put upon her.

In after times, I was sorry for my haste in condemning her. So true is it, that our judgment ought to be matured before venturing to pass sentence.

When autumn came, the short days and cold dark nights prevented me visiting Alice quite so frequently as formerly, and even when I did, I was obliged to return in a hired coach, as the streets were so filled with young men, imitating the roystering manners of the Court gallants, that it was impossible for a modest young gentlewoman to go through them by night without meeting with insult, or even being in danger of her liberty.

One night, in going from Kensington,

my coach was surrounded by revellers, and if it had not been that the men-servants made free use of their cudgels, we should have been stopped. As it was, we got clear off, and I only suffered from the fright.

Sir William inquired very closely of me what description of leader this party had, and when I related how he wore a black silk mask fringed with gold lace, said, shortly, "Ah! I thought so," and looked put out all the time of supper. Afterwards, Alice told me it was the King, who always wore a mask in case of being known.

One day, as I sat watching anxiously for Lawrence, who had not been with me for some days, thoughts of the

cottage and Windsor coming back to me, made me feel sad even to tears, and, coming softly up stairs, my expected visitor found me weeping. At first I tried to avoid telling him the cause of these, but at last he persuaded me to do so, and seemed pleased at my remembering it so well; though a dark shade stole over his features, giving place for a time to a perplexed expression, when I said I had never felt so happy since, and would have given worlds to question him about the Princess, but he spoke so kindly as he wiped the traces of my tears away, and made me rest my head upon his shoulder, told me to think of that

as my refuge, and never doubt his affection.

My heart beat fast as he spoke, preventing me answering as I would have wished. While I was puzzling what to say the door was flung hastily open, and some one looked in, but vanished so quickly, that I could not feel sure who it was.

The interruption, however, changed the current of our conversation, for Lawrence kept conjecturing who it could be, and then relapsed into a sad fit, from which nothing I could do would rouse him, for, although he answered yes and no when I spoke, and thanked me when, as a last resource, I sang a new song I had learnt, I saw his thoughts were pre-

occupied, and after one or two more efforts my heart began to feel chilled, and feigning some excuse I left the room.

After walking up and down the corridor, reasoning with myself, I returned to try to sooth Lawrence's grief, thoughts of the report again coming back, but he seemed perfectly unconscious of my entrance, and determining not to force myself upon him, I sat quietly down, ready to weep again.

After a time, Lawrence sighed deeply, muttering something to himself. I heard him breathe rather than speak a name, and with every pulse thrilling with anxiety I leant forward to hear it once again.

The moments seemed ages, and the silence grew insupportable, and I

clasped my hands over my heart and waited. My fate hung upon a whisper.

Suddenly a shadow crossed my brain. I thought of the night before Clarendon went into exile, of the report, and of her who bore the same name as I did.

My hope died away.

A sudden conviction of the truth flashed upon me, but with that truth there came another, even as terrible—the knowledge of my own feelings.

I had never analyzed them before, and now they burst upon me with an agony of shame and despair.

I tried to rise, but my trembling limbs refused to support me, and I sat immo-

vably gazing like a condemned criminal upon my judge.

My life passed in review before me, and the veil was torn aside. I saw how I had blindly allowed this love to grow with my growth, and entwine itself with my very life, and now all was lost.

During the time that elapsed before Lawrence noticed that I was present, years seemed to have passed over my head, teaching me my own infatuation; but with it came a strength and power over my own actions greater than I had ever felt before.

I had been a girl in thought and feeling, but this one hour's experience had made me a woman, and an actress like the rest of the world; so much so

that I could scarcely believe myself when I knew that I was talking quite gaily as Lawrence questioned me about my dull looks.

Thus I learnt to practise my first deceit, for even as I laughed I had to turn away to hide my face, and pretend I had a cold, to account for the strangeness of my voice.

Life was only now beginning with me, but I soon learned to be a greater hypocrite still, for it came into Lawrence's mind soon after this to make a confidante of me; and it so happened that one evening, requesting me to walk in the garden, he took the opportunity to unburden his mind, and tell me his love-secret, and surprised me deeply by saying

that he had the Princess's solemn promise to remain true to him.

His greatest grief now was the negotiation going on between the King and the Prince of Orange, of whom it was said, that although he had already declined the honour, he was now likely to think better of it.

I listened to all this, walking steadily and silently by Lawrence's side, holding my head down to hide the flushing of my cheek, and the tears which, in spite of all, would rise, more verily I believe from pride than aught else; but I need not have feared my emotion being seen, he, poor fellow, being in too sad a mood to think of anything but his own misery.

For the first time in my life, I was

glad that our conversation was interrupted, and felt truly grateful when I found that Walter Fenton was the cause of it.

He, however, gave me little opportunity of profiting by it, as merely giving me a message from his sister, and expressing some commonplace compliment as to my appearance, he went away, leaving me puzzled at his extraordinary behaviour; and Lawrence only partially opened my eyes, by saying in a gay tone—

“Surely he cannot be jealous of me?”

A few days after this I accepted the post of Maid of Honour to the young Princesses, and, much to my grief and

annoyance, was chosen as the particular friend and favourite of Mary.

For a short time, my new mode of life appeared more like a dream than reality.

I disliked the restraint and formality we were obliged to adhere to in public, but still more so the levity and idleness of our private life.

Day after day I longed more and more to be in my lonely garden, where, even if it was a little dull, the dulness was amply compensated by the freedom I enjoyed.

Alice left London the same week that I undertook my new duties, and I was thus deprived of her counsel and sympathy when I felt I most needed it, and

if it had not been for the frequent opportunities I enjoyed of seeing and speaking to my kind friend the Queen, I do not think even the fear I had of displeasing the King would have induced me to conform to the weary life I led.

The Princess Mary, as I said, at once made a favourite of me, and, as a natural consequence, her late adviser and favourite became my inveterate enemy.

This, however, gave me but little uneasiness, as I disliked her heartily, and was very glad when, in a fit of spleen, she retired to the country for some time.

Of course I heard a great deal of what was going on in the world, but only through the same false colouring through

which everything was represented at Court, and one day I well nigh got myself into disgrace by speaking my mind too openly on this very subject.

The King, accompanied by my Lord Buckingham and another, whose name I forget, came to sit with the Princesses.

The conversation gradually took a grave turn, and Buckingham began to flatter the King, by telling him there was not a man in Great Britain but would defend him to the last drop of his blood, and that he (Buckingham) had but to give the word, and the whole populace would obey his summons.

I felt the blood rise to my cheeks at this barefaced lie, for it was well known that the country was in a ferment of

excitement, and that it needed the utmost efforts of the faithful ministers to keep up even a semblance of content, and that Buckingham himself was so detested that he lived in hourly danger of assassination.

He was still speaking, when, unable to conceal my feelings, and forgetful of all else but anger at the deception practised upon the King, I exclaimed—

“’Tis false, Lord Buckingham, and you know it is.”

Had a thunderbolt struck him he could not have looked more surprised; the colour left his face, and laying his hand on his sword, he sprung up; then, with a forced laugh, he fell back again, swearing he wished I had been a man.

“If I called myself a man, I should not act the part of a knave, my lord. Whose fault is it that the King’s name is becoming a by-word amongst the most degraded of his subjects?—whose influence is sapping away the love of all good and true men?—whose machinations are sowing discord in the kingdom; and while he flatters with his tongue grasps a dagger in his hand?”

“Hold, Mary,” said King Charles, laying his hand upon my shoulder; “hold, girl, I command thee. Be silent, my lord,” he added, seeing Buckingham about to speak, “I will inquire into this; *she* has nothing to gain by a lie, so she may speak the truth.”

“Ay, and looks devilish handsome when she.....”

“Silence, and leave the room!” exclaimed the King, passionately interrupting his free and easy favourite, who, with a smile upon his lip (which I could see, nevertheless, grew pale and quivered), made a low bow, and lounged quietly out of the apartment.

The King paced up and down for some time, then arresting his steps in front of me, he said, surveying me from head to foot with a half smile—

“By Jove! I wish some of my courtiers had such stuff under their jackets as thou hast under that silken boddice of thine. But, seriously, what meant this outburst;

do you think you can afford to make Buckingham your enemy?"

"Your Majesty! I can speak the truth without fear of anyone. I could not sit still and listen to his perjured lips. If I have done wrong I am very sorry. I would die to serve your Majesty, but not one in a hundred of your subjects would."

The King started, and said—

"Why, what has put this in your head, girl? England was never more loyal than it is at present. Who has been filling that pretty head of yours with such ideas?"

"No one, your Majesty," I answered;
"I have seen and judged for myself.
Oh! your Majesty! go amongst them

yourself; go with good men; listen to them, and be what we all love and honour; be yourself, and the kingdom will flock to your side."

My excitement here got the better of me, and I burst into tears. King Charles was silent for a while, and then laid his hand upon my bent head, and whispered—

"I thank you, Mary; I will tell Catherine what thou sayest."

When he was gone, I too rose to go, only anxious to hide myself after this display, and more so, as the ladies burst into peals of laughter, and called me a little tigress; so I escaped, and in the seclusion of my own chamber thought over the events of the last hour, coming to the conclusion that I was a great fool

for my pains, as I had done no good, only making a powerful enemy for my self.

Willing to forget it, and find some consolation, I went to visit Mr. Burnett, and having unburthened my breast to him, was much pleased to receive his commendation and praise at my courage in thus speaking my mind, though he bid me be careful of the Lord Buckingham, whom I had offended past forgiveness.

Nothing, however, came of it for the present, the King seeming to forget it, the favourite telling the story as a great jest, and taking every opportunity to be seen with me. It was in vain I refused to speak or listen to his dis-

gusting flattery and praise. I told him I detested him, but he only laughed, and said—

“I was worth all the beauties in London, and a better actress than the stage boasted.”

CHAPTER II.

• • “I have never loved thee,
I cannot love thee . This is not my fault ;
It is my destiny. Thou art a man
Restless and violent. What wouldst thou with me,
A feeble girl?” * *

LONGFELLOW.

MY greatest vexation about this adventure was from the raillery of the Princesses, who took delight in bringing him into my presence, and whenever I refused to join their wild pranks would threaten me with sending for this man. Lawrence heard the joke from some one, and took part against me, hurting my

feelings thereby more deeply than I was willing to acknowledge even to myself, and at last tried to avoid him too, but that was a difficult matter, as he had taken to coming to me so much of late, and used to join in all the fun the ladies got up to pass their leisure hours.

His visit being to me was only a pretence, as I speedily discovered what brought him there, and felt very angry to notice how the Princess Mary took opportunity to be alone with him, sending Anne away, who, seeing through her design, and having her own ends in view, easily lent herself to the deceit.

Of me she was utterly regardless, and would beckon him to come to her in one of the windows, where they stood talking in

whispers until upon some one approaching the chamber, I would be drawn into the conversation.

One day, being deeply engrossed with each other, they did not hear the entrance of the King, who, seeing at a glance who occupied the window, came softly up to me, bidding me be silent.

I sat with my back to the Princess and Lawrence, but he could see them, and I saw him grow deadly pale, and clench his hand passionately, as he muttered—

“Damnation! he will kiss her next.”

This climax, if it did arrive, he did not wait to see, as starting up he left the room, leaving me a heavy weight at my heart, and the fear of Lawrence’s safety adding to my other cares.

Three days elapsed without my again seeing Lawrence, and all that time my heart was torn by private apprehensions for his safety; then I ventured to ask the King what had become of him, and heard how he had punished his presumption, namely, by making him bearer of private letters, requesting the presence of William of Orange.

Our mornings were much saddened by Lawrence's absence, and as the year closed I felt almost glad it was over, hailing the beginning of another with a hopeful heart.

Christmas was kept with great rejoicings, which were led by the King and Duke, who took a prominent part in all that went on, thinking to gain the

affection and confidence of the mob, who were soon ready to swear by such a merry monarch, particularly as some sharp eyed courtiers, seeing signs of a decline in Buckingham's favour, took pains to make it surer by spreading reports that the King was tired of his vices.

The Duke gave out publicly that he intended to marry again, and secure a Protestant prince to the throne. The marriage between the Princess Mary and William was decided, and hailed with loud acclamations, his name being already familiar from his gallant conduct during the wars in Holland.

This Christmas was of great import, but even more so to me, on account of an adventure which befell me. It happened

as I was returning from rather a late visit to Mr. Burnett; the coach was surrounded by a mob of maskers; I grew frightened, and thinking I would escape unnoticed through the crowd, I, getting out, had succeeded in reaching the gate to the Park, when I was accosted by a man wearing a red mask.

Ere I could answer he threw his arm round my waist, and put something over my mouth, which almost choked me, and, holding down my head, he carried me along at a rapid pace to where a coach was waiting, and we were driven off at a great pace.

Perfectly helpless, and nearly fainting from the pain caused by the bandage, I leant back, and mentally resigned myself

to whatever was my fate, feeling I was equal to hold my own against most people.

After a drive of an hour or two we stopped, and in the dim light I saw we had reached a stately castle, and as we waited for the lowering of the bridge, I noticed that the man who had accompanied me gave all the directions, and was obeyed with much respect by the attendants; but a bandage was drawn over my eyes, and was only removed when we got into a room, where the dazzling light almost blinded me; and I buried my face in the pillows of a couch, fearful of seeing anything.

Finding no one addressed me, I looked up, and found I was alone in a large and

beautifully furnished room, lighted by rose-coloured lamps, and filled with the fumes of a censer of burning essence, which, in spite of my fear, exercised such a soothing influence over my excited feelings, that I fell asleep.

I was awakened by an ugly old woman, who shook me until I came to my senses, and then, pointing to a table laid with refreshments, she left me, locking the door behind her.

It was evident I was a prisoner, but where or for what purpose was a complete mystery. At first it gave me great uneasiness, but then I began to think I had been carried off by mistake, and when this was discovered I would be

sent home again; so I waited the arrival of my goaler with great impatience.

The day passed wearily away, nor did even a sound greet my anxious ear; and the evening tints were stealing into the room before the attendant returned, and then I found she was deaf and dumb; so of course unable to satisfy my curiosity.

In leaving, she gave me a note, in which I was addressed by name, and told that, not having succeeded in gaining my favour, the writer had adopted the present mode of securing me until I consented to become his wife.

Here was a climax to all my troubles; my last hope was banished, and utterly at a loss and miserable, I leant my head upon the table and began to cry.

As my tears ceased, a feeling of strength and comfort stole into my heart, and mingled with indignation at the insult came a sense of my own power.

It was well this change came, for ere long the entrance of Buckingham himself set all my doubts at rest, and alarmed, though it nerved me for the worst. When he entered I gave way to my feelings by a burst of reproach. He did not take the least notice of this, except by saying he was quite prepared for all I had said, but was determined to marry me with or without my own free will.

Giving me no time for reply, he began a ludicrous account of his adventures in trying to secure me, having three times waylaid and captured wrong people, and

once received a wound from those who accompanied one of the ladies.

Whilst he was speaking, my plans were arranged, and seeing my only hope of escape lay in pretended obedience, I acted my part so well, that Buckingham did not care to hide his exultation, and laughingly anticipated his triumph when he took me to Court as his wife.

He was still with me when the old hag I have mentioned entered, followed by a man, who whispered a few words to Buckingham, of which I only heard the words—"Majesty," and "instantly."

While he addressed my lord, he kept eyeing me with apparent curiosity, and very handsome eyes they were too, with a gentle and serious expression, much at

variance with the words I shortly heard fall from his lips, as, taking his friend's arm, he hurried him away.

As they went out of the room the stranger looked back, and beckoned me to follow.

There was something in his face made me trust him, and I obeyed. He remained to close and lock the door, but while pretending to arrange the lock, adroitly slipped the key inside.

The reader may believe how eagerly I seized it, and how intently I listened; my lord calling him from the staircase, bid him be quick with the "cursed lock." Then all was silent. Feeling I had liberty in my own hand, I locked the door, and lay down to arrange my plans.

After a time the old woman came, bringing me wine and fruit. When she was gone, now seemed my moment of escape.

Wrapping a cloak round me, I opened the door, and followed the glimmering light of the lamp carried by the old woman through several rooms and along a gallery, this last communicating with a dining-room, from which proceeded great mirth and laughing. Disconcerted by this, I took refuge in the recess of a window, which, being open from the heat of the weather, gave me a starlit view of the moat and park.

I was almost forgetting where I was, when a door opening, I heard voices close beside me; then followed a song; and

after that another and another, all sung by one whose voice, I thought, I recognized as that of the cavalier who had liberated me.

When, from the faintness of the sound, I judged that the door had been closed, I ventured cautiously out of my concealment, but had barely reached the centre of the wide hall, when a door directly before me was thrown open, and a group of men (those I had heard singing) appeared. For a moment, I stood paralyzed: then with a faint hope that they had not recognized me, turned, and fled hastily along the dimly-lighted gallery.

My hope was vain, for, as I turned, a voice, whose tone was perfectly familiar,

shouted, with a loud laugh, a hunting call. I heard Buckingham swear a loud oath, and seem to attempt to prevent the rest following, but in vain, and the next minute they were all in pursuit.

I was now in a terrible fright; they were evidently half, if not altogether, intoxicated, and I knew I must expect to meet with insult if I was caught.

What had lately been my prison appeared now a haven of refuge, and the hope of reaching it in time lent wings to my feet. Alas! I had taken no heed of the way, and, missing the turning, I found myself back in the hall, and face to face with some of the party who had been too drunk to accompany their companions.

I was desperate, my pursuers were

close behind, and the others waiting triumphantly for me. I remembered the open window, and heedless of consequences, I sprang from it.

As I did so I felt how mad I was, but too late; down and down I went, until I seemed to lose all sensation, and was only recalled by coming in contact with deep and cold water.

I heard a cry of dismay, and as I lay breathless upon the surface, supported by the hoops and light clothing I wore, lights hurried from window to window, and were flashed down upon the dark moat; but I saw no more; the shock was too much for me—I fainted. When I recovered I was being carried up a long

staircase. A warm cheek was laid to mine, and a voice whispered—

“You are safe, do not betray me.”

I knew at once it was he who had been the means of my escape, and, with a reliance upon his honesty, I clung trustingly to him, hiding my face upon his breast as he brought me into the brightly lighted room.

“By Gad! thou art an active fellow; thou art first again.”

And the man who spoke clapped my preserver upon the shoulder.

“He knew the way best,” shouted two or three others, rushing into the room.

“Carry her up again,” whispered Buckingham, “and for your life do not let her face be seen.”

No sooner did these words reach me than I looked round, and, disengaging myself from his arms, confronted my lord.

As I did so an exclamation broke from some one near me, and turning, to my intense delight, I saw Walter Fenton. He was instantly at my side, and, with my hand clasped in his, I felt I could brave anything.

The room was half-full of courtiers, and in the midst stood the King himself. He was talking with a laughing face to Buckingham when he heard my name, and, turning sharply round, uttered an exclamation of angry surprise.

Walter Fenton, still holding my hand,

demanded satisfaction from the villain who had insulted me.

But the King was no longer the laughing reveller of a few minutes before. Waving his hand, he said—

“Be patient, sir, this is an insult to me; the lady is my ward. His Grace of Buckingham presumes even beyond himself.” Then he added, turning to Buckingham—

“This is too much, my lord; impertinence may go too far, even in a favourite. Ask this lady’s pardon instantly, and do you, Fenton, see that a coach is prepared. We ourself will escort her to her home. Truly our mirth has ended in what my graver brethren term heaviness.”

A smile passed round the group, but

Buckingham looked deeply incensed, and attempted to speak more than once; each time, however, he was silenced by the King, and then appearing to think better of things, he made a courteous apology to me, gained the King's private ear for ten minutes, during which time he effectually made peace, as his Majesty laughed merrily, and ended by tapping him playfully on the shoulder, as he bade him try fair means in his amour.

He then placed my hand in his arm, and proceeded to the coach. I could see my lord's diabolical sneer as he did so, and the vision haunted me for months afterwards.

CHAPTER III.

“A man so various that he seemed to be
No one but all mankind’s epitome,
And in the changes of a single moon
A fiddler, statesman, lover, and buffoon.”

DRYDEN.

OF course my adventure became known, and created a great sensation, in which many rather envied than pitied me, and, indeed, several told me plainly they would have given their ears to be in my place; but nothing lasted long in our versatile Court. The precariousness of Buckingham’s influence began to engross their attention, and I was soon forgotten.

I lay long ill from a fever brought on by my midnight bath, and I was scarcely well again when the Court was thrown into a perfect ferment of excitement by the announcement of a visit from the Prince of Orange, and though the true reason was kept secret, it was well understood for what purpose he came.

So every eye and thought was now turned upon the Princess Mary, and every tongue busy criticising her words and demeanour.

I saw her distress and perplexity, and could not but feel sorry when I thought of her certain fate, and the agony she must be a prey to.

The arrival of the Prince caused great festivities, which were increased when it

was known they gave him pleasure, and though those who knew him better affirmed that had our King been the guest the Prince would rather have cut off his right hand than expend so much good money upon shows and feasting. Be this as it might, he could, and did, enter fully into the mirth, fun, and good living that went on, and fed and amused himself heartily at our expense.

At the beginning he was a little shy with the Princess Mary, but it soon became evident that her fresh beauty and gay English manners had won his heart, and he threw aside all constraint, devoting himself assiduously to her, and making it his business to win her regard and love before he made his final offer.

The King looked on with a strong interest, and even grew tender hearted towards Lawrence from pity, I suppose, as he saw the Princess admit the attentions of his great rival so readily.

At first the Princess received these marks of admiration as her due, and exerted all her powers to flatter and win the Prince's regard; but when there could be no doubt, and King Charles himself began to give her his advice, she, when she found he was really at her feet, would fain have undone her work; but too late, the Prince had her royal uncle's consent. The kingdom demanded her marriage, and, perhaps, too, a secret voice spoke of regal dignities which, had she permitted

love to guide her choice, would never have been hers. Her tears, it is certain, flowed in private, and many a sad thought darkened the light of her beautiful eyes; but all these things passed away, and she seemed to forget every former feeling in the preparation made for her departure from England.

Upon the night before her wedding, she made fatigue an excuse for retiring somewhat earlier to her own apartments, and I, being alone with her, was the only witness to the last outbreak of affection I believe she ever showed. After I had closed the door of the entrance-chamber, she remained for a long time much cast down, then taking my hand, looked earnestly in my face, saying—

“I believe you are my friend, Mary, and at least I know you love Lawrence, so for his sake will be so.”

Had a serpent stung me, I could not have felt more deeply; all my worst nature was roused, and I could have struck her as she sat gazing up at me with her beautiful and heartless face, where even through grief I could see a sort of triumph.

Shuddering at the violence of my own feelings, I turned away, forgetting all except that we were both women, and loved the same object; but widely different was our lot. She had even in her misery the knowledge that every pang she suffered vibrated twofold stronger in his breast, whilst I had no comfort; all

was darkness, and the world a hopeless, loveless burthen.

“You ask too much. How can I bring him here to be tormented.” As I said this my lips grew pale, and I well nigh gave way to my passion and left her.

Her answer somewhat recalled me—

“Mary, you forget yourself. I ask you to be my friend, and you insult me. Is my love likely to bring me happiness? Think you that it is a pleasant prospect to give myself within a few short hours to that cold-hearted, grasping Dutchman, and leave my home, my country—all, all—to satisfy my uncle? Is that a pleasant prospect, I ask? And yet, knowing all this, you would deny me the last

gleam of sunshine that can shine upon me. He has loved you like a brother: surely you are grateful, and for him will do this."

So I listened, and having had her directions, dressed myself and departed on my errand.

I found Lawrence waiting well nigh beside himself with anxiety. My heart softened as I gazed at his miserable expression. I felt even more than wretched, and would have given worlds to comfort him, but the words died on my lips. I could only beckon him to follow me, and he, seeing my agitation, thought I was angry with him, and seizing my hand, besought me to have pity—to feel for him—and not deprive him of the

only brightness life contained—my own affection.

His words burnt their way into my inmost soul—my whole frame trembled with emotion, and, perfectly unable to bear it any longer, I tore my hand from his, and without daring to look at him, ran on before.

The cold night wind seemed to add fuel to the fire already burning my heart. I do not yet know what I did, or how I reached the palace, but I brought Lawrence to the Princess, and when he hesitated at the door of her chamber, and, pressing his hand upon his heart, stood irresolute, I laughed, and “bade him be a man.”

A flush rose to his pale face, and his

eyes met mine for a moment with a surprised gaze; but he only said—

“Mary—my sister.”

His words rang in my ears for many a day; they were the only ones approaching a reproof I had ever heard him utter, and impressed me proportionably.

Of the parting scene with the Princess I shall say little. I remained, it is true, in the ante-chamber, and might have seen and heard all that passed, but wild noises rang in my ears, strange lights kept dancing before me, while my heart beat faster and faster every minute, and I sat with my head buried in my hands until Lawrence called me. I found the Princess lying upon a couch, sobbing bitterly; her love and grief had brought on a fit of

hysterics, and he, in an agony of fear, knew not what to do. While I was attempting to calm her, the noise of approaching footsteps sounded in the long gallery, and Lawrence had barely time to leave the room, when the Princess Anne and one of her ladies in waiting entered.

She expressed her surprise at finding her sister in tears, and, as if suspecting the cause, looked sharply about; and I was relieved at the arrival of Queen Catherine and a whole bevy of Court ladies, coming to put the bride elect to bed, according to an old fashioned custom; and though at first Mary took little pleasure in what was going on, she soon managed to enter into all their mirth, and

laugh at the not very delicate jokes they made upon one another.

Her marriage took place next night in that very room, and without a trace of emotion she swore to love the Prince.

That night a line from Lawrence made me aware of his having permission to join the fleet, and that he bid me farewell, perhaps for ever, as if possible he would hide himself in some new country.

I was in the act of reading this note when King Charles entered the apartment, and taking it from me, read it. He laughed a little, and said—

“Poor boy; he has felt the first bitterness thy sex can impart, but time will heal his wound, and you’ll have him back as gay as ever.”

Then, as I shook by head, he added, kindly—

“If he does not come we’ll send for him. He is a good lad, and has done us no injury in breaking his own heart, so cheer up little one, tears have no right in those eyes, and there’s more than one near who would endure even this boy’s distress to win tears from thee. Nay, little one, do not take it to heart. Off with you to her Majesty, and let her comfort you. Women are all alike; they have always tears ready.”

As I had declined accompanying the royal pair to Holland, I was appointed to a vacant post in her Majesty’s bed-chamber, and the joy of being so much

with her comforted me a good deal for Lawrence's departure.

Ever since the adventure with Buckingham, my preserver, whose name I found was Ronald Stewart, a sort of cousin of the King's, and a great favourite, had been constantly about Court.

I liked him much better than many of the others who strove to attract my attention. I owed him my release on that night, and was not a little proud that he should select me from those who would willingly have had him with them.

Day after day he danced attendance upon the Queen, and finally succeeded in being appointed gentleman equerry to her Majesty, so that our hours were now

spent entirely together, and I grew to look upon his presence as something necessary to my daily routine of duty or amusement.

Lawrence did not remain long with the fleet, but was sent back with despatches, and again installed as private secretary to the Duke of York, which, however disagreeable to him at first, he could not refuse, and time soon taught him to endure even this.

He was sad and depressed at times, but at others reckless of what he did. Suddenly his depression took a new form, and he began to mix up with those belonging to the Romanist faith. For this I blamed Mary Beatrice, who sought every

means of making converts to her own religion, and took great interest in poor Lawrence.

CHAPTER IV.

“Oh! when the last account ’twixt heaven and earth
Is to be made, then shall this hand and seal
Witness against us to damnation.
How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
Makes deeds ill done. Hadst not thou been by,
A fellow by the hand of nature marked,
Quoted and signed to a deed of shame,
This murder had not come.” * *

SHAKESPEARE.

It was now that a whisper, which for weeks had been thrilling through the country, suddenly burst upon us with its full strength: and this was the discovery of the Popish Plot.

The discoverer was one who had

already been brought before public notice by his ability in worming out suspected treachery; and, although his bad character should have at once thrown a doubt upon any assertion made by him, his very vices sharpened his wits, and making him desperate, rendered him a useful tool in the hands of a designing coterie. This man was Titus Oates, infamous in history and in character. No sooner had the first roll of this new thunder rung in our ears, than the names of those accused pealed louder still. With horror and amazement I heard Lawrence branded as a conspirator and traitor; and, in company with some of the noblest in the land, he was thrown into the Tower to await trial.

For some days, I hoped he might be set at liberty, scarcely believing my senses that he should be a prisoner; but a confirmed report reached me of his change of religion, and then only I began to fear, not his innocence, but his ability to withstand the accusations heaped upon him.

Queen Catherine felt much for me, and obtained permission for me to see him, thinking an interview might conduce to my comfort.

I found him not a whit cast down, rather indeed triumphant at the fate he had almost courted, and received me with a smile, laughing at my fears, saying they could not find him guilty of anything, but that he had been seized by

the enemies of the Duke of York, and must bear the weight of others' crimes as well as his own.

I was somewhat easier, though I did not feel so sanguine as Lawrence; and feared he might, being too confident, neglect some means of establishing his innocence. His parting words, too, though uttered in jest, sounded to my heated imagination like a prediction of his fate; they were almost the same he had used the very day I first saw him, and that moment came vividly before me, as he said—

“If I am a martyr, Mary, you taught me how to endure to the last. I may after all die upon a scaffold!”

These words made my blood run cold,

and I would have returned to beg him to use every endeavour to bring on his acquittal soon, but his guards hurried me away with these fatal words ringing in my ears, and with as heavy a heart as it was ever my lot to bear.

On my way back to the palace, Walter Fenton joined me, looking dull and dispirited, but speaking lightly of everything of the day. I had not seen him for some days, and now his depressed looks struck me so much that I could not forbear asking the cause.

He made no answer for a few moments, and then looking in my face, said in a sad tone—

“Can you be so blind? If so, I am indeed most miserable.”

Tones are often much more expressive than words ; and now the tone of his voice told me a secret I would willingly have left unknown.

My involuntary expression of sorrow unnerved him at the moment, and overcome by his feelings, he told me the whole story of his love, of his disappointment on finding that I loved another, and how he had waited patiently, hoping I might yet learn to love him.

Alice, to whom he had told his tale, counselled him to wait silently, and he had done so. My heart sunk within me as I heard his words, and thought of the deep pain whatever I could say must give him.

All I could do was to thank him,

and tell him I, too, was miserable. Poor fellow, he understood me, and pressing his lips upon my hand, he said—

“I will do what I can for him, for your sake.”

Alice wrote afterwards, and told me he had made her his confidante, adding, in her own kind way, how sorry she was to relinquish the hope she had so ardently desired of becoming my sister, telling me to use my influence with Walter to rouse him from his disappointment, and bring back his old lightheartedness.

This letter comforted me, as I felt, in not loving him, I was in a way slighting my dearest friend Alice, so that, on seeing the light she took it in, my mind was at ease. After this I did not see

Fenton for a long time, although I heard of his doings from Alice, who still appeared to entertain a hope that I might change my mind.

The evidence against poor Lawrence was so strong, and so subtly invented, as to rouse the most painful apprehensions in all our breasts.

The Duke of York exerted himself much in secret to bring up proofs in his favour, but from the known malignity of the party (to whose machinations we attributed the pretended discovery already mentioned) he dare do little openly, and so his exertions were not of much avail.

The next few weeks are marked in my memory by many bitter recollections.

One after another, men whom I had heard revered from my childhood, were seized and committed to the Tower, upon no greater suspicion than the words of this Titus Oates; who, it was said, had risen from the lowest ranks, and whose character was such as to have compelled him to seek a livelihood by the most disreputable means.

I was very anxious to see this man, and when I did, to my surprise, I recognised in him the same features which had appeared at my home the night from which all my troubles seem to have dated.

There was no change in his hideous countenance, the very same heart-sickening expression of low fawning dupli-

city, the side glance that spoke so plainly of a cowardly nature, the bent head of a mock humility; and what, to me, was the most revolting of all, the low, hypocritical whine with which he spoke, interlarding his lies with the holiest names and comparisons.

The King being anxious to satisfy his conscience as to the truth of the overwhelming accusations, brought against his personal friends, had their accuser introduced privately to the Queen's apartments, when both he and her Majesty questioned him closely upon his authority; and I shall never forget the pain with which I saw the influence this man speedily gained over the King, and how, as he saw this power, he grew bolder in

his speech, until he spoke so insolently as to bring the listener to his senses, and call down a rebuke upon his disrespectful manner, whereupon he shrank back again, and whined forth his apologies, and I was astonished the King could be so blind.

When Lawrence's trial came on, I obtained leave to be present, that I might hear the true nature of the charges brought against him; nor was I the only lady there; many of his friends attended, and, in spite of the popular feeling about Oates, a number of ladies, whose husbands held exalted appointments, attended, and openly expressed their interest in him.

I secured a retired seat, from which I

could see and hear without being prominently conspicuous myself; but far off, and hid as I was by a dark hood, poor Lawrence recognised me at once, and I saw he was well pleased. He even sent one of the messengers to me to bid me "Good day" in his name, which gave me courage to bear even the dreadful accusations they brought against him.

When he spoke in his defence, I felt the blood rush like fire through my veins, and knew not that I had risen and stood with clasped hands, until a hand was laid upon my shoulder, and a low voice whispered to me to be composed.

I felt abashed, and looked round to

see who spoke. It was Ronald Stewart, who, without my knowledge, had followed me, and, at the Queen's request, had managed to get a seat close to mine.

“ Oh, Ronald ! I said,” using, in my agitation, his Christian name, “ will they not believe him ? ”

“ No, they will not ! ” he replied. “ Liars and fools ! Oh ! if I were King for one month, by God, I'd not leave one of the dastardly crew ! Look ! look at that villain, Oates—no wonder you are astonished. How can men believe such a scoundrel ? ”

As he spoke, Oates had risen, and, with downcast eyes and pretended humility, was addressing the judge, con-

tradicting, word by word, all that Lawrence had said, and taking out a handful of letters, he laid them down, begging the judge to consider their contents. The letters were Lawrence's (written principally in moments of excitement); with a few notes found in his private desk, in which he spoke warmly of his affection for the Romanist faith, wishing that King Charles had long ago embraced it—dating all the troubles of his reign from his first attempt to conciliate the angry and factious bodies of Protestants.

Then came a long correspondence between him and Père la Chaise, which, although entirely dictated by the Duke of York, and without any design upon

the government, was at once seized upon, and so read as to create an almost universal belief in his guilt.

I saw Lawrence's cheeks flush, as one by one these private notes, in which he had laid bare the working of his heart, were read derisively before a crowded court; and though few, if any, had the key to their real meaning, yet there was light enough to elicit sneering pity and pretended commiseration.

The trial had lasted two days. On the evening of the second, I had permission to spend an hour or two with Mr. Burnett; and not finding him in, as I expected, only stayed a portion of the time; and wishing to see Alice's garden, to give her a report of it in my

next letter, I walked there instead of waiting for the coach.

I spent longer than I intended looking about amongst Alice's pet flowers; so that, before I thought of returning, darkness was gathering fast, and long ere I got half way to Mr. Burnett's house, it had set in a miserably dark, misty night. Yet I cared little for this, and gathering my cloak a little closer, I hurried along, avoiding as much as possible the public streets.

I was thus almost running down a narrow lane, leading into Oxford Street, when I was startled by hearing footsteps, and turning, saw two men hurrying after me. My natural impulse was to conceal myself in a doorway. I had scarcely

done so, when they stopped within a few yards of me. To move was now impossible, so I sat perfectly still.

They commenced an earnest conversation, but in so low a tone that I could not catch a word they said. On hearing a low whistle on the other side of the street, they were silent, and seemed to wish to conceal themselves.

A quick step approached, and a man appeared, carrying a bright lantern, by the light of which I recognized the face of one the magistrates I had seen that day. He had scarcely passed me, when the men I had been watching sprung out upon him, and, after a short struggle, he fell to the ground. One of them then ran to the next

corner, and whistled thrice; at which a coach drove up; and I, turning to look where he had fallen, was startled to see him standing upright, as I had imagined him dead; but looking more closely, I saw that one of his assailants was supporting him in that position, and, when the coach stopped, seemed to carry rather than lead him to it; and then told the driver to go to Primrose Hill, as the gentleman had fainted.

When the last sound of the wheels had died away, I ventured from my hiding-place, and, trembling with horror, crept along under the shadow of the house, fearing every sound, almost sinking with dread when the rumble

of a coach in the distance reached my ears.

As soon as I reached Mr. Burnett's house, I ran up to his room, intending to tell what I had just seen; but the door was fastened inside; so, after knocking and getting no answer, I turned to go away, supposing he had not come back; but meeting Margery upon the stairs, she told me he had come in as usual, and, after taking some refreshment, had retired. We went together to his door, and again tried to gain admittance. As he did not answer, I grew alarmed, and sent Margery to bring the men who waited with my coach, and, by my orders, they broke the door open. Then my worst fears were realized.

My dear old friend lay senseless upon the hearth, having fallen down just as he reached the bell. When I had seen him laid upon his bed, and made Margery help me in rub his feet and head, I sent off for medical aid. All our efforts to rouse him were fruitless; and when the doctor arrived I had to bear the dreadful intelligence that the fit was one of palsy, and that all hope of his recovery was over.

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Thus, death was busy with my treasures again. And while one of the few remaining stood upon the brink of the precipice, another lay dying before me.

We watched his bed all night ; towards morning I had almost hoped he would rally, but the fit returned at day-break, and his gentle spirit passed away without even a sigh—indeed, so quietly, that though I held his hand in mine and watched his breathing, I could not tell the moment that he became immortal.

CHAPTER V.

“ I held a parley with my tears,
My tears that fell like rain.

* * * *

True, that for thee, I would have died,
Or lived all fear above ;
And rudest shocks of life defied
With an o’ermastering love.”

E. C. MOGRIDGE.

THIS loss was a great trial to me, and coming at the time it did seemed doubly severe. Utterly unable to rouse myself to any exertion, I was nearly being laid up with a bad illness, from which I was only saved by my increasing anxiety

for Lawrence, whose accusers, since the discovery of a terrible murder, attributed to the Romanists (the unfortunate victim being a magistrate before whom Titus Oates gave his evidence) had become doubly irate, and clamoured openly for the blood of those lying in the Tower.

It may seem strange to my reader, but I never thought of connecting this murder with the events I had witnessed the night of Mr. Burnett's death, and it was not till long after that, in talking of the events of the time, I happened to mention it, and found that I must have been witness of this very murder, falsely laid to the Papist's charge.

England rang with horror against the

perpetrators of such a deed. The mob, that gathered round the body, threatened to attack the Tower, and obtain revenge for themselves; day and night infatuated men and women, driven wild by the lies and money lavished on them by the party headed by Titus Oates, paraded the streets, assaulting every one they imagined a Romanist, and even openly insulted the Queen, who now seldom ventured beyond the palace gardens; yet this and every other minor trial was driven from my head by the terrible decision of the court upon Lawrence.

His sentence was—Death!

When it was told in the palace there was a general outburst of sorrow. Lawrence was a favourite with all, and the

cause of his fate seemed so groundless that it was scarcely known to any.

What was sorrow to those who only knew him as an acquaintance was death to me—utter annihilation of every hope or wish for the future. I had loved him with my whole heart; one by one those few who had occupied a place in it had been taken away, and its whole force concentrated on this one object.

For hours after the news reached me I lay in a state of stupor, the good Queen sitting with her arms round me, and doing all a mother could for my comfort; but, like Rachel, I “refused to be comforted”—the light of my life was darkened; there was but one rest—the grave; but one object before me—the

scaffold, reeking with the blood of my beloved. In vain I pressed my trembling hands upon my eyes, or hid them in the Queen's breast—the vision would not leave me.

After hours of agony, which none but one who has felt as I did could imagine, a new strength came upon me, and scarcely aware of what I did, I rose and went to the Tower. My name, and the orders of the Queen's equerry, who attended me, gained me admittance, and I found myself in the presence of the condemned. As I entered a mist rose before me. I could not see him I sought, and in my agony cried out—

“Where is he?” Then, as no one

spoke, I seemed to lose all reason, and sank down.

When brought to my senses I was lying upon Lawrence's breast, clasped in his arms. I, sobbing, though tearless, besought him to let me die. All restraint and thought of reserve was gone. He listened to me as I told him the story of my love. When I ended, without saying one word in reply, he knelt at my feet, and taking my hands in his, asked my pardon.

"Pardon!" I said; "pardon for what? For being the idol of my life, the guide of my actions, the only one I ever loved. Oh! Lawrence! Lawrence! beloved of my soul! tell me you love me. Even now, at the last moment, say but that

word, and I shall raise up my head and defy the world. Oh! that word, Lawrence; but one little word."

I knelt before him, my heart throbbing on my lips, my whole soul hanging on his answer. It was as I knew it would be, and felt rather than heard him say—

"Too late, too late."

I rose from my knees, and stood before him. How long I know not, but it was his arm that guided me to a seat, and then, as I gradually began to understand what he said, I heard—

"Do you remember years ago, when I first saw you. You spoke of death as a martyr's and a patriot's end. Dear sister, do you think I am either?"

A few seconds passed ere I could reply, and then, as the thought that he had deserted the faith of his forefathers came over me, I could only say—

“God knows, my brother.”

He looked sadly at me, saying—

“*You* do not know, Mary? Then God pity me; for if your heart cannot throw a light over my death, what can I expect from a cold world.”

I could only sob and ask him to forgive me. Seeing my distress, he tried to explain his views, but this only increased my sorrow. I could see nothing but death, body and soul, and I besought him to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

“I do, Mary,” he replied; “I do, with all my heart.”

I had been taught to believe no Papist thought of the Christ, and the idea that I might have wronged them now forced itself upon me. He saw, and understood what I felt.

“A Romanist does believe in the Lord. He believes all you do, only more, for he does not limit the justice of God, and believes that He will not condemn irrevocably for the deeds done in a short life, but, by an intermediate state, would give the sinner another chance of obtaining an entrance into His kingdom. He believes that the living may pray for the dead, making their peace with God. Will you try and believe this for me. Remember I am not dead, either to you or my God; and

whatsoever a man asks, believing, he shall receive. I do not ask you to be a Romanist, Mary; God forbid I should so lead you from your Church; but do not judge harshly, if some of those you once called brothers, seek peace in the breast of a Church whose precepts speak ease to the burthened heart, and forgiveness to the most hardened sinner."

His eyes gleamed with a wild light as he spoke, and I did not, nay, could not, speak. Why should I combat with him at the hour of death? Why try to darken the hopes he clung to? Our interview was now nearly over; the darkening room told me of the parting hour; so I only bent my head, and said—

“God have mercy upon me, a sinner.”

The hour came, and we parted.

Heaven only, who knoweth the secrets of all, and seeth the heart of man, could understand the unspeakable agony of that parting.

As the kind-hearted governor led me away, I heard Lawrence utter a cry, the first sound of anguish he had given way to, but I dare not answer, and could only cling silently to my guide.

CHAPTER VI.

“He, the young, the brave, who cherished
Noble longings for the strife,
By the roadside fell, and perished,
Weary with the march of life.”

LONGFELLOW.

TERRIBLE dreams haunted me all that night.

At one time I was drowning in an ocean of blood, through which I was beckoned on by Lawrence. Suddenly the blood passed away, and flowery plains surrounded me; angels floated in the clear air. Again I saw Lawrence—this

time fastened to a stake, the white flames encircling his quivering limbs; then again he was on a reeking scaffold, calling down vengeance on his murderers.

I had determined to attend his execution, and was clothing myself in black, when the Queen entered. She suspected what I was about, and, fearful of my meeting with insult, did all she could to dissuade me; but finding it of no avail, she at last consented, upon condition of my taking Ronald Stewart as a protector, to which I agreed, caring little who was with me, so long as I obtained my wish.

Ronald, seeing me utterly oblivious of his presence, and feeling deeply for me,

led me on in silence, carefully avoiding the principal streets, which were now becoming much crowded, everyone pressing in one direction, and all of them in holiday dress, laughing and talking as if there was no such thing in the world as grief or death.

Once I heard Lawrence's name, but ere I could hear more Ronald had turned round, and by a look checked the speaker.

As we drew near the fatal spot, the crowd grew denser, and it was with great difficulty we pushed forward. Suddenly a strange sound thrilled through the air—it was the voice of the multitude, and told *they* were coming; and

after a few seconds of breathless expectation, the procession appeared in sight.

My eyes grew dim as I gazed, straining them to catch a glimpse of the victim. At last I did so, and almost at the same moment he recognized me. A bright flush rose to his face as he leant hastily forward and called me. I heard my name above the roar of the crowd, and, quitting Ronald's arm, sprang forward. In another instant I was beside the cart, but ere I could reach his outstretched hand, it had moved on.

Even now, though well nigh forty years have passed by since that fearful day, I remember every incident as if it had just happened; I can see before me in the dim twilight the very gleam of

enthusiastic triumph that lighted his face as he called upon that multitude to witness that he died "true to his God and his country."

Many in the crowd seemed anxious to prove their sympathy, while others, led on by the Oates faction, raised up cries of contempt, shouting out insulting names, and cursing him and his religion as the work of the devil.

I can still see the mass of eager faces, the terrible sea of eyes; I can *hear* the dreadful silence when the last prayer was said; and Lawrence knelt beside the block, and clasping a little cross to his lips, he laid his head down never to lift it again.

All was silent as the grave, until a

dull, heavy blow boomed upon the air, and then, as one mighty voice, a groan broke from the crowd, followed by hisses and cheers, as, holding up the streaming head, the executioner cried—

“Thus perish all enemies of the King and Holy Protestant faith.”

I fainted, and only recovered my senses as I was driven along in the direction of the palace. Ronald sat opposite, gazing compassionately in my face.

“Be comforted, Lady Mary,” he said; “God’s will is for the best. Poor Lawrence is in heaven. God grant we may all be ready to go.”

I had not wept till now, but something in his tone seemed to release the

fountain of my tears, and for some time I sobbed helplessly, leaning back and covering my face. Ronald remained silent, thinking, I suppose, my tears were the best outlet for my grief. He only took my hand for an instant, and pressed it to his lips, looking at me so kindly that I felt more soothed than if he had tried to console me by words.

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I fear all this is but sad, but though my story may seem so, it is not willingly, but of necessity. This last seemed to be the climax of all my griefs, for what greater calamity could befall me now? My existence had lost its beacon light;

the romance of my life had passed; my girlhood had fled, and left me a grave and lonely woman.

At first I thought, nay, hoped I might die, and pass away from the hard and aimless life which seemed now before me.

Hour after hour during my long illness (which, brought on by excitement and grief, followed the day of execution) did I lie with clasped hands, beseeching God to take me away from the evil to come.

Hour after hour I pictured to myself the radiant gleam that lighted up Lawrence's face, when he turned from the eager crowd and looked up to the calm blue sky.

The first thing that aroused me was a visit from Alice, who, hearing of my state, by the Queen's own desire, came like a faithful friend to weep with one that wept.

Ah! well do I remember the day of her coming. The winter had passed away during my illness, and, scarcely knowing that the spring had come again, I sat gazing from the open window.

The fresh air blew upon my cheek, lifting my hair from my neck, but I felt it not. The birds sang in the green boughs, but I heard them not. What were birds or fresh breezes to me? My sunshine was lost in the darkness of the tomb, and the groans of the multitude on that fatal day still rang in my ears.

I sat for a long time at the window, looking out, but seeing nothing; at last, I became aware that some one was with me; a soft arm stole round my neck; my head was drawn fondly to a warm bosom, and a voice, so sweet that I could have fancied it was that of an angel, whispered—

“Is not the spring lovely, Mary?”

I looked vacantly up in her beautiful face, and for the first time since my illness felt there was something left for me in the world.

Alice's presence woke many thoughts; and, busied with these, I did not mark the flight of time, so that when the Queen came I was startled to see the full moon shining upon us, making

Alice's face appear to wear a halo, and look so beautiful, that even Catherine, who seldom expressed much admiration for beauty, stood regarding her with a pleased smile; then kissing her upon the forehead, said—

“You look like a spirit, child.”

Alice bent down and thanked her.

“Now, Mary,” said her Majesty, in a different tone—“You must let this friend of yours doctor you. She is to share your room until you are strong enough to go away with her, which for your sake I hope may be soon.

“Where to, your Majesty?” I asked, listlessly.

“To her own wild country, my dear, our kingdom of Wales. They are per-

fect savages there, are they not, Lady Alice? They tell wonderful stories of your countrywomen; how they attire themselves in taller hats than the Puritans, and such as were never seen in any other country under the sun."

Alice defended her country merrily, and said they were not half so savage as the natives of Scotland, who went about almost naked, and after hiding in holes and caves all day, came out in the evening to rob each other, and dance to the shrieking of horrible instruments called pipes.

"A truce to your abuse of our Scotch subjects, Lady Alice," said the King, in a jovial tone, as he, entering unperceived, had heard the description; and now,

bending his laughing face low before the fair calumniator of his country, he kissed her hand rather impressively.

Catherine's cheek grew red as she glanced keenly from one to the other, her countenance assuming an expression I had never noticed before—a blending of sternness and sadness it was painful to witness.

“I did not expect you would honour us with your presence,” she said, in a cold tone, looking at her husband.

“A glad surprise then, dear Kate: unexpected pleasures are, or at any rate ought to be, the greatest. I had no notion our Court was to be graced by such a fair little Welch woman, for, from

her own words, I gather this lady belongs to that wild country."

The stern expression instantly faded from the Queen's cheek, giving place to her usual gentle smile. She was once more the same confiding, forgiving wife as I ever had seen her.

Thus was she so easily pleased and satisfied by Charles; and he, knowing her ready belief in his innocence, took great pains to have a plausible explanation always ready, never permitting himself to appear annoyed by her asking, though, from what happened every day, it was evident the poor Queen had much cause for disquietude.

The King knew his own faults as well as any one else, and if there was ever a

regret for his weakness, it was when he thought of his confiding wife; sometimes, though I fear seldom, he compared her gentle manners and conversation with the vulgar beauties for whom she was so often forgotten.

The moment he saw Alice he was struck by her delicate beauty, and the musical softness of her voice, but fearful of Catherine's suspicions, controlled his admiration much more carefully than was his wont.

"I must present the Lady Alice Fenton to you, Charles, her name is already well known."

"Fenton," said Charles, hastily; "is this William Fenton's daughter?"

“I am, your Majesty. My father has been, I trust, a faithful servant.”

Charles looked vexed, but chased away the look as he again took her hand, and said, playfully—

“We bid Alice Fenton welcome in her father’s name, and in her own beg her to remain, long to be our loveliest flower.”

Alice coloured, and drew back, saying hastily, “I am an invalid, your Majesty, and beg you to excuse me, and permit me to devote my time to my dear friend, Lady Mary.”

“That is a hard and uncourteous request,” said Charles, playing with his sword, but still gazing earnestly at Alice,

“is it not, Catherine? Can *you* not help to gain us such an ornament?”

Alice's face grew crimson, and the tears started to her eyes, as Catherine, alarmed at her husband's admiration, began to see a new rival in poor Alice, and looking sternly at her, said—

“The Lady Alice must always be entitled to every honour a virtuous English woman can desire, both for her own beauty and her father's sake.”

“More for her beauty, by God! than anything in the world. I never saw such a face!” exclaimed Charles, vehemently, and so impressively that no one could doubt the truth of his affirmation, much less the poor Queen, who looked still more angry, and surveyed

the innocent cause for some minutes. She then turned to the King, and thinking Alice would not understand her, said in French—

“She is beautiful enough, even to aspire to more than your Majesty’s admiration.”

Alice was unhappily more accomplished than Catherine supposed, and although living so remote from Court, was fully aware of the gossip that went on, so that this allusion to the King’s weakness struck her at once.

“For Heaven’s sake stop this, Mary,” she whispered, hiding her face on my neck, down which I felt the hot tears trickling.

The situation of all was equally un-

pleasant, perhaps most so to me, I being attached to each, and devoted above all to the thoughtless cause, the unfortunately careless King. I had never seen the Queen display so much anger before, and could not but feel it was rather the outbreak of pent-up passion that had been long rankling at her heart, than feelings caused by the present interview. Charles seemed to think so too, and going up to her spoke in a low tone, about letting people's evil tongues disturb her peace, or malign him in her ears. I did not catch her reply, but it appeared to vex him much, and putting his arm round her he led her away, closing the door with a sharp, angry

sound, showing, as plainly as words could do, the state of his temper.

“Oh, Mary, let us go away!” said Alice. “What can the Queen think of me? Come with me to our quiet home; I can never, never, stay here.”

I tried to compose her, assuring her of the kindness of both King and Queen, and that the latter had many trials, so that if sometimes an apparently slight cause moved her, the real cause might have happened long before. After a time, I persuaded Alice of the truth of my assertion, calming her agitation, though I myself felt anything but resigned, and for hours after she was fast asleep, lay pondering over my future duties, and the events of the morrow.

Oh, how much there lies in that little word, "to-morrow!" The sick man looks forward in hope of being better, the dying of an everlasting awaking, the broken-hearted to peace, and the parted to re-union. Many a bright hope had I seen clouded on the expected to-morrow. Many a fair dream had faded away, leaving me scarcely daring to think of another to-morrow, and yet a gentle spirit of hope again stole into my heart, and I raised my head, and hoped for "to-morrow."

CHAPTER VII.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

“I loved him more than man was loved,
Worship was but a name
For the deep passion that had moved
My spirit’s fiercest flame,
And yet an hour has overthrown
Love that in long years had grown.”

WHEN the usual hour of Queen Catherine’s visit approached, I began, for the first time in my life, to feel a nervous wish that something might happen to prevent it, and in hopes of being able to send Alice out of her way, did not

mention her custom of coming at a particular hour. She seemed to have forgotten the troubles of the night before, and talked happily of her home, and the delight she anticipated of showing me her favourite haunts ; after describing the scenery, she sat awhile silent, and I was on the point of asking her to continue her description, when she said, abruptly, “ What time does the Queen visit you, Mary ? ” and upon my telling her, rose and said she would go upon the terrace for an hour.

I had never seen Alice look stern before ; her meekness and humility had been so prominent as to annoy me at times, but now they had vanished, and I saw by nature she was even as proud as

I was. I rejoiced a little at the thought of it, after she had left the room, for, let me confess, I had often felt ashamed of my imperfections.

Alice had not been gone many minutes when the Queen entered, and I, with some trepidation, rose to meet her.

“Sit down, child,” she said, in her kindest tone, “I am not queen here, you know—cannot you let me be at peace sometimes? But where is your friend?”

I felt my cheeks glowing as I answered, and she seeing my confusion, said—

“Are you ill, my little pet, or has something vexed you? Tell me, perhaps I can cure you.”

Her kindness overcame me, and I

began to cry, as with some hesitation I said—

“I was so sorry, yesterday, your Majesty, poor Alice did not mean to look beautiful.”

“Eh, child!” said Catherine, smiling, “so this is it; poor Alice, she cannot help her pretty face. I do not blame her. Oh, no, Mary! I have sorrows you do not know of—the greatest sorrow and pain that can befall a loving wife, one, please God, you may never have. I am often wretched, but try to do my duty, and if I fail, may the holy Mother of God forgive me, and lay to my charge the transgressions which my faults may in a manner induce him to commit.”

It was the first time she had ever

hinted at the scandalous proceedings of Charles, and I felt proportionably confused, utterly at a loss what to answer, or how to comfort her evident grief. She had, however, eased her heart by imparting even this, and the outburst, slight as it was, swept away the remnants of last day's anger.

“Where is Alice Fenton?” she said, after a time, “do not let her avoid me.”

I proposed to call her, but hearing where she was, Catherine bade me rest, and went to join her.

About a quarter of an hour elapsed, and then she returned alone, but flushed and impatient, throwing herself upon a chair, she covered her face with her hands, and sat long silent.

I saw she was deeply moved, but left it to her to explain the cause if she wished; this she at last did, saying, through her hands—

“I never saw him proved before. Oh! that I was as beautiful as she is.”

My heart beat thick, a sudden conviction came over me that the King had been with Alice, and I trembled, not for her virtue, but lest any of the courtiers might have witnessed the interview.

“You do not speak,” said Catherine, looking at me. “Did *you* know he was there. But no, no, how could you? Listen, child, you are my friend; I have few, if any, except yourself, who can forget I am Queen, and think of me as their equal. Alas! I am less, I am a forsaken

and unloved woman. They told of his faults, but I refused to believe them. Nay, I closed my eyes and ears lest I should be tempted to doubt him; it was long ere I did, Mary, and when I found the truth, my heart grew cold within me. Nor can you wonder; I had worshipped him as a being above all others; I had only lived in the light of his love, a love I believed pure as the Heaven itself. My own heart was laid bare before him, and his, I fondly hoped, was also to me. I was wrong, Mary. I found I had worshipped a graven image; the idol of my life was shattered; the faith of my life broken; and although I loved him as deeply as before, my love was a different love, it was a love fraught with

pain, and became agony in its intense anxiety and jealousy. I had never been jealous before; now the slightest look sent the bitter sting to my heart, and I grew a burthen to my own soul. I watched as a mother watches her child, and prayed day and night that he might be pure; but to-day, Mary, this very hour, my hopes are shattered. Again, I never thought him base, and untruthful, and heartless—ay, heartless! for one who would strive to urge a poor girl to evil, must be base indeed. And this man is my husband!”

She uttered the words hastily, as if in desperation; I rose, and crossing the room, fell at her feet.

“Not there, child,” she said; “here,

beside me. I am a lonely woman, let me feel I have one who loves me. Oh! that I had never come to this cold unkind land. Why did they send me, to be neglected and insulted. Oh, Charles! you knew me not, or we might have been happy even here."

The poor Queen leant her face upon my shoulder. What could I say to comfort her, but an untruth, and I felt it was so in saying it, namely, that she ought not to give credence to such tales as were against her husband's honour.

She only shook her head, saying—

"They are too true, I know it all now. God pity me. You love King Charles I know," she continued, "nothing

will change such love as you feel, for yours is not adoration of a heart, but loyalty of a noble spirit. I dare tell you what I would not breathe to another, and what is breaking my poor heart. It has been God's will to withhold from me the pleasure of having a child, and the country, your country, Mary, requires an heir. James of York is hated, and though the Princess has married one of your faith, he is an alien, and not a whit more acceptable to the feelings of the country. Well, they forget Kings can feel, and urge him to give an heir to the throne, by divorcing me, and taking another wife. They may gain their end; indeed, I feel they will. I shall go back to my country,—ah! how to return, a de-

...

served, widowed wife. I have but one hope—and that is in the marriage of the Duke. Then only may I escape, and such is the fate of Royalty.”

The Queen spoke so passionately, that neither she nor I were aware of the presence of the King,—and it was her change of countenance, and exclamation of “Charles,” that led me to the discovery.

Before I could collect my thoughts, I was pushed aside by the King as he threw himself by Catherine, and drew her towards him.

“Kate, Kate,” he exclaimed, in a broken voice, as he looked keenly in her face, “my own wife, what is all this? Why unburthen your heart to a poor

sick child, and turn away from one by right your comforter. Kate, wife, darling, turn to me. Why choose her?"

"She loves me, Charles, and there are none else."

"None to love you, Kate?" he exclaimed, reproachfully. "Why say this? is my love nothing?"

"Your love,—oh! husband of my youth—your love, *when it was* mine, was my life, and now even the remembrance gives me strength to endure."

"Kate, is this like yourself? is it kind!"

Thus far I had been an unwilling spectator, and was now trying to creep away, when Charles recalled me, and taking my hand, said—

“ She has been like a mother to thee,
Mary. Comfort her as thou wouldst
thine own parent.”

CHAPTER VIII.

“If mortal love might win my heart
Ye would na ask in vain,
But in the darksome grave it's laid,
Ne'er, ne'er to rise again.”

Scotch Song.

AFTER some time it was decided I should give up my nominal duty at Court, and seek health with Alice amongst her famed Welch mountains.

I felt only one regret at leaving the palace; that was, parting with the Queen, but even this was slightly alleviated by a feeling of restraint which had marked her

actions since the day she spoke so openly to me of the feelings of her own heart.

I have often seen it thus during my experience of life. The heart is apt to fear one who knows its secret trials, and too much confidence breeds coldness and constraint. So it was with my kind mistress, for since she raised me to her confidence a coldness had sprung up, and we both looked anxiously forward to the following year to show us the truth.

Upon the eve of our journey the Queen sat long with me, giving me advice, talking of my father and mother, and after that spoke of Ronald Stewart, telling me to try and return the affection he had given me.

It was in vain to attempt any explana-

tion of my own feelings with regard to this wish. She only smiled, and, patting my cheek, said I was yet young, and would learn sense before I came back. Meantime, all she required was that I should bid him farewell personally. I consented to do this to please her, although caring very little about it; but yet, as the hour of his coming drew near, I grew nervous, and would willingly have withdrawn my consent.

When he entered the thought of the last place at which I had seen him, namely, the EXECUTION, was so vivid that I was unable to address him for some time, and sat with my face buried in my hands. He understood me, and, walking to the window, stood

with his back towards me for a minute or two until I called him, and begging him to pardon my weakness, asked him to sit by me and tell me of ^{him} myself. My request was granted more fully than I expected or wished, as he explained the exact state of his own family and fortune, of his poverty and indolence, and utter dependence upon his relation to the King.

I had known this before, but was pleased that he should tell me himself, and listened with attention.

He next spoke of my own position, and of the difficulties I would meet with, struggling through life alone and unprotected. This of course brought him to speak of his own affection; and how

ardently he besought me to let him shield me, by giving him my hand, if not my heart, which he said he would win by constant devotion.

I could not answer as he wished; my soul sickened at the idea of being a wife. I had no wish to live. I was weary of life—of its duties and troubles—and would willingly have shut myself out from all participation; and told him so, as a complete ending to all his hopes.

He, however, took my confession very quietly, and, as he bid me farewell, said—

“You cannot forbid me to love you, Mary; and nothing except your union with another will prevent me hoping. God bless and comfort you.”

Thus we parted. Poor Ronald had

spoken openly and kindly; but his presence recalled that fatal day, and for hours after he left me I lay in a sort of stupor, thinking only of the one who was gone.

Since Lawrence's death I had felt that he was even more my own than in life, and his continual presence seemed with me, floating round me in my dreams, until I awoke smiling, and talking to him as if in life, and the bitterness of the truth would cast me down to the earth again. All that he had told or taught me remained sacred, and even long forgotten words or actions returned to my memory, and I sat hour after hour reading the past, as it rose upon the tablet of my heart.

Feeling thus, how could I listen to Ronald? Alas! I could do nothing but weep, and though I sometimes heard Alice say my sorrows would heal themselves, I could not believe her, and thought nothing would ever ease my heart.

The parting with Ronald prevented my sleeping that night, so I rose harassed and worn out to undertake our journey, and as we were obliged to start by day-break, the reader may fancy how tired I was.

Upon arriving at our stage for the night, a lonely posting-house, we were received with great respect, refreshed by a substantial supper, and then ushered into a large wainscotted bed-room, in the centre of which stood a great four-posted

bed, hung with heavy drapery, held up by grotesque old figures.

We immediately retired, to be ready and off again by daylight.

The second day we entered Wales, and passed through much fine scenery, but my heart was too heavy to feel interested even in this, and it was almost a relief when night came on, and hid from me what I should have admired, but was unable to appreciate. Long after dark I was startled from a sort of dream by Alice seizing my hand, and telling me to awake and look at her home.

On looking out I beheld a prospect that must have roused even a more depressed spirit than mine. The full moon had risen, and shone down from a cloud-

less sky, lighting up the loveliest view the eye can imagine.

From the rising ground where we had stopped, we looked down on a broad stream, shining like gold in the rays of the moon. It ran into a small bay, upon which the lights in the fishermen's boats twinkled here and there. At the opposite side of the river, and occupying a corner near the entrance of the bay, rose an immense rock, crowned by a stately castle. The moon, though throwing the base of the cliffs and the water at their feet into black shade, lighted up the castle almost as clearly as at noon day.

Suddenly a trumpet rang across the water, it was answered by one of our

outriders, and almost instantaneously a cannon pealed out a welcome, and in a few minutes I saw a boat shoot out from the shadow below the castle, and approach rapidly our side of the river.

We now began to descend, and reached the landing place just as the boat touched the shore. Alice threw open the coach-door and uttered her brother's name, then a cheer burst from the boatmen, and another gun boomed forth its welcome.

Walter's arm trembled as he put me into the boat, but he showed no other symptom of emotion.

I felt much for him, and heartily sorry that he had loved me, doubting as we proceeded, the wisdom of trusting my-

self so constantly in his society, as I now might expect to be; but his cheerful tones, as he talked with Alice, for the time dispelled my apprehensions, and our arrival on shore gave me other objects to occupy my attention. As the bows grated on the rock, I heard the cheery voice of Alice's father, calling out a welcome, and was carried in his arms up the slippery stone steps, which led to a postern in the castle wall.

Walter followed, bearing Alice in a like manner, and then, after a little laughter and mirth at what Sir Walter told me was a Welch custom, we were admitted through an iron door opening into a passage cut out of the solid rock, and leading by an easy ascent to the

court-yard. Oh! how magical was the effect of the burst of light.

When we emerged from that dark gallery into the bright moonlight that filled the court, and threw great shadows from tall turrets and towers, looking perfectly gigantic in the uncertain light, there were dancing lights illuminating the tower windows, and figures hurrying about, and uttering loud exclamations in an unknown tongue.

Astonished and delighted by the novelty of the scene, I would willingly have tarried had I not been pressed on by Alice, who saw nothing marvellous in such a familiar prospect, and was now anxious to get beside the hearth, and tell her adventures with more ease.

I was much too tired to note anything that evening, but I cannot do less than describe my impressions. After crossing the open court we ascended some steps, which ran along the southern portion of the building, and led to a stone veranda, supported by handsome Saxon pillars; passing along this we entered a large door, opening on a narrow winding stair, lighted here and there by an oil lamp, and carpetted with a thick sort of matting; from this we passed into a lofty dining hall, wainscotted with panels of polished oak, and hung all round with full length portraits of the ancestors of the Fentons.

A portion of the room was separated from the rest by a row of marble pillars,

meeting a curiously painted ceiling, adorned with allegorical designs, representing the fall of man.

Three large bay windows lighted this spacious apartment, each forming a pretty little room of itself. These Alice and I found to be very pleasant resorts, as we could make them quite private, by drawing the thick tapestry curtains.

There was a large open fire place at one side of the dining-room, and the crackling fire that burned there threw a warm light over the whole room. Two greyhounds seemed to delight especially in its warmth, and appeared too happy to take more notice of our entrance than to look up and wag their

tails, immediately relapsing into their interrupted slumber.

A noisy welcome, however, awaited us in a smaller room, to which Alice led me, and in which I found she had established a little colony of pets and flowers, for, with a care for her every wish, her father had fitted up this room like an Eastern boudoir; and certainly a more lovely or romantic bower could not have been chosen by Titania herself.

The room was an octagon, formed so as to occupy a floor of one of the towers, and commanded a double prospect; one range of windows looking towards the sea, the other upon a woodland view, through which the river ran like a silver

thread, losing itself in the far off hills, which rose as if they aspired to Heaven itself.

Within the room was everything that love could suggest or money purchase; statues, china, reliques of many countries, books, and pictures, tastefully arranged; but, lovelier than all, was the gentle owner, as she stood, the very personification of happiness, fondling a pair of little doves, who cooed a sweet welcome.

I did not wonder that Sir William deprived himself of many things to gratify his pride and affection for her.

It was some days before the restraint

I felt in the presence of Walter wore off, but it did so in time, and I grew accustomed to see him near me; and when he departed to join the army, I felt the blank left by his absence as much as his father or sister did, but was in a great measure consoled by the frequent intelligence we now had through him of what was going on in the world, for in our isolated situation we were almost entirely ignorant of what went on, except in our immediate vicinity, and, indeed, as Sir Walter often said, London might have been under water for a week without us hearing anything about it, and certainly, though Walter's first letter made us aware of the many great events which

were happening, we still clung, with a greater affection than ever, to our quiet home.

CHAPTER IX.

“Poor queen, so that thy state might be no worse
I would my skill were subject to thy curse.
Here did she fall a tear ; here in this place
I'll set a bank of rue, sour herb of grace,
Rue for Ruth, here shortly shall be seen
In the remembrance of a weeping queen.”

SHAKESPEARE.

It was only a few months since I had been in the bustle and excitement of a Court, and yet during that time England had rushed blindly to the edge of a mighty precipice—poor Lawrence's execution was but one among many, and Oates had reaped too rich a harvest not

to tempt many as unprincipled as himself, to follow his example.

The worst of these, one Bedloe, had once been a servant in Sir William's family, who, when he heard of the plots pretended to have been discovered by this vile wretch, said, that if the crown found it as difficult to get quit of him as he had done, he pitied them from his heart.

After this, one Dangerfield, the discoverer, and it was supposed by many, the inventor, of the plot of the "meal tub," as it was called, secured the ear of the Parliament. Although the King resolutely set his face against the encouragement of such impostors, this man gained great renown, and obtained

access to the houses of some of the greatest men in the land. Important intelligence such as this, had of course reached us in our retirement, and Sir William, by accident, heard a pretty full account of the debate upon the bill brought in to exclude the Duke of York from the throne.

Protestant though he was, he rejoiced when it was thrown out (which was brought about mostly by the bishops, all excepting three setting their faces stedfastly against it).

A sad piece of news reached us at the same time, namely, that my Lord Stafford had been convicted, and ere long would lose his head. Lord Stafford had been a great friend of Sir

William's, who told me many interesting anecdotes about him.

It was on the eve of his execution that Walter reached London, and knowing his father's ancient friendship for the noble prisoner, he went openly and requested permission to bid him farewell.

His petition was granted, and not only did he see him then, and by his kindness assist to soothe his last moments, but attended him to the scaffold.

He gave us a heartrending description of the sad event: how the people crushed each other to death that they might hear his voice; and when he asserted his innocence, how, with one voice, that great multitude burst forth—

“We believe you, my Lord!” “God bless you, my Lord!” and melted even to tears—they wept for the death of one they had condemned with curses.

Our great excitement now consisted in watching for letters, and then reading them over and over, until the narrative was continued by another.

Thus I read the history of my country—a history which interested the whole world, and had well nigh ended even then—a history where man contended with God, seeking to overrule the evident working of the Almighty—a history blackened by some of the darkest crimes that blot the records of our land.

I trust my reader will not grumble if

I merely glance over those years I spent in Wales, where, from the seclusion in which we lived, the world appeared a panorama, in which we looked for intelligence of friends and foes. My amusements were simple enough, and consisted in visiting the poor, relieving their wants, and sharing the good that God had given me with His less fortunate children.

I cannot say that I continued to find so much pleasure in this as I at first anticipated; perhaps the reason was that I did not do it with such a true spirit of charity as I ought to; and when the renown of my wealth and open-handedness, spreading abroad, brought many applicants, who not only accepted relief,

but actually subsisted upon my money, giving me barely thanks in return, I felt angry, forgetting that what I did was for the Lord, and that I ought not to look for gratitude here, but for a reward in a heavenly kingdom.

Still I toiled on, in spite of many disappointments, exercising my judgment as well as I could in giving to those who deserved it. But alas! such is the nature of man, that I, in the end, found few friends; nay, those I offended by withdrawing my hand, when they were able to work for themselves, were treble in number to those who really thanked me.

Once or twice during the time, I received letters written by the Queen's

own hand, and enlightening me upon passing events, but never even hinting at her personal story, which, from what we heard in other quarters, must have been a troubled one.

Of Ronald Stewart I heard nothing, indeed, had almost forgotten him, the only thing keeping him alive in my memory being his immediate connection with *the dark day* of my life, the execution of Lawrence.

Though events of great importance were happening every day, they never disturbed the quiet peace of our home, only reaching us when the world had almost forgotten them, and was already speculating on some new wonder.

The trial of Lord William Russell was

of so late a date, that his execution had ceased to excite the horror it did at first long ere we knew anything, but though our mourning was late it was not less sincere, and much we wondered what the Court and Parliament would do next.

I wrote to Lady Rachel telling her how much I grieved with her, but I got no answer, she, poor thing, being for a time utterly cast down, though, so religious was she, that she rose triumphant over all these terrible afflictions, proving to the world what the heart can endure when devoted to God, and true to the love God has hallowed. Many years after I met her, and told her how much I had felt her silence, and she, with her

usual candour, confessed she had avoided writing, thinking from what I said in my letter that I meant to offer her charity, which I, however willing, had particularly avoided doing.

Things were going on quietly enough, and my health being better, I was able to ride and walk for many miles, and thus enjoy the beautiful country round me.

Walter was absent, and Sir William deeply engaged in building a new turret at the western side of the castle, when we were all thrown into the greatest distress and consternation by a special messenger arriving with the sad intelligence of the poor King's death.

At first I only thought of him as my kind friend and master, and called to

mind the merry glance and jovial voice of him who was gone for ever. However, this selfish grief (if we may so call it) gave way before that of sympathy for the Queen, and again my fears for the country.

The latter was uppermost in Sir William's mind, and I did not wonder when he announced his instant journey to London. My own heart drew me thither, and I soon prevailed upon him to take us with him, though Alice, saving for my presence, would have remained in Wales as willingly as go to London, now that Walter was absent, he having been sent very shortly before the King's death with despatches to Scotland, and had by royal permission taken command of a

Highland regiment under Sir Hugh Cameron.

We had heard nothing since his departure to Scotland, and only knew of his appointment by a letter, received from Sir William Temple, who mentioned it as a piece of great news, saying—

“It was the best thing that could happen to a hair-brained cavalier at such a time.”

On reaching London, we found the whole city in confusion, one party acknowledging King James, another making mysterious allusions to the Duke of Monmouth, and a third boldly holding out for Protestant succession.

Sir William, of course, espoused the

side of James, to whom he hastened to tender his allegiance. He was received by that wily monarch with much favour, almost immediately presented with an office of high trust, and publicly complimented by both King and Queen.

The reader may believe my first visit was to my kind friend the now Dowager Queen, and by her I was received with open arms. She appeared to find great relief in conversing with me. I once more took up my abode in the little chamber I had occupied before, and spent most hours of the day, and frequently the night also, in conversing with the Queen.

She took great pleasure in speaking of Charles's affection, and told me that in the last interview she had with him he

had spoken of his sins. The list must have struck anguish to her heart, yet she herself pretended to think light of them, and to have known them before.

I was very much struck by one acknowledgment ; she said, one day,—
“ You thought me hasty and unkind to your friend, Alice Fenton. I feel I appeared so, dear, and have often regretted it, but just then I had been driven almost mad by the insolence of the Duchess of Portsmouth and another, equally lovely and innocent in look as your friend. I could not see his admiration without pain.”

After a pause she continued—

“ I was not angry with you, child, but ashamed of all you knew ; I felt

lowered in your presence. I could not endure even your pity, and was glad when you left, and I was alone with my grief, with none who dare say a word of sympathy to my face. I could be calm before those who hated me, but my strength gave way before the gentle light of thy sweet eyes, Mary. You reminded me by your likeness to your mother, of the days that are lost, and the remembrance added agony to my grief. Now you are with me, you must not desert me again. You are like my own child. I can talk of him to you, for you knew him best of all; you knew that his heart was tender as a child's, that his nature was true and good; you saw him when he was himself. My

poor Charles! it was the wickedness of those near him that darkened his character, not his own heart."

Thus did the widow try to veil the crimes of him who was now lost to her, crimes that had embittered the days of her life, rendering every action a trial, and making her a mere name in her own palace—crimes that had impaired the lustre of his great soul, and dimmed the light that might have been immortal—crimes whose gratification gave neither peace or advantage, but left a sullied name, a broken-hearted, hopeless wife, and an heirless throne behind.

I did all I could to comfort the Queen; but what could I say? I could not tell

her to forget the sorrows of her life—
to forget these would have been to
forget life itself, so commingled were its
shades and sunshine.

CHAPTER X.

“Every feature had the power
To aid the expression of the hour,
Whether gay wit and humour sly
Danced laughing in his light blue eye.

* * * *

Or soft and sadden'd glances show,
A ready sympathy with woe.”

SCOTT.

I HAD much to tell of my own life and adventures while in Wales, and did my best to amuse the Queen, by recalling anything I thought might interest her. She questioned me as to Walter Fenton, but seeing the subject was disagreeable to me, changed it, and began speaking

of the present King, telling me many interesting things of the Queen, whom she said every one admired; but she feared she would influence the King much, and that their united exertions would considerably disturb the tranquillity of the Church.

This conversation gave me food for meditation. I had heard from Mr. Burnett much of the horrors of a religious persecution, and trembled lest such should again darken our land. Visions of blood-stained scaffolds, burning piles, and dismantled churches, filled my dreams, and utterly unable to rest, I got up at sunrise, and went down to the palace garden. It was the beginning of June, and the trees still wore their

first green leaves; this morning the dew-drops sparkled on every leaf and flower, some of the latter even bending beneath the diamond-like load.

Leaving the open part of the grounds, I wandered through a shrubbery, and along a tempting alley, arched overhead with woodbine and roses, and completely sheltered from the rays of the sun. I soon found myself in the heart of the shrubbery, and surrounded by a wilderness of rare trees and plants; perfectly enchanted, I watched the play of a large fountain built of red granite, which occupied a nook so green and beautiful, that I could have fancied myself in fairy land.

Behind the fountain a walk led me to

a little grotto, almost hid by creepers. Here I took refuge, and intent upon finding a retreat in times of need or wish of retirement, I began exploring the glistening palace.

The outer room, or hall, was composed entirely of spars, and cooled by a reservoir in which three small jets of water rose, giving it altogether such an unusual and romantic appearance, that I could have fancied myself in some fairy realm. Within this hall I found another room, fitted up as a boudoir, and stretching myself lazily upon a couch, gave way to pleasant dreams.

My reverie was interrupted by my name being uttered in a loud voice, and almost directly afterwards a quick step

sounded upon the floor of the outer room, and the next minute Ronald Stewart stood before me.

My first impulse was to spring up, and receive him in a stately manner, but this was instantly prevented by his kneeling before me, and half-gravely, half-playfully, kissing my hand, as he bade me "Welcome back."

He had altered much since we met. Indeed, when I thought of it afterwards, the change was so great, that I wondered how I remembered him at all. His hair had been light and golden, it was now dark brown, matching well with the clear brown of his complexion. The addition of a beard and long curling moustachios, added not a little to his

manly and changed appearance. Nor were his manners less so. The flippancy that had in by-gone days sometimes rather shocked me, had given place to a quiet, earnest gravity, that irresistibly won your confidence, and induced you to speak to him as you would to an old friend.

This struck me at once, and insensibly to myself, I began to acknowledge and appreciate the spell of his silent but expressive affection, shining through all he said or did.

By mutual instinct we avoided anything immediately referring to the past sorrows of my life, talking of the Court, the late King, and sometimes of my sojourn in Wales. I was surprised to

find he knew nearly everything that I did, even to the very names of my favourite places.

The minutes passed pleasantly away, and when I rose to return, I was much surprised to find how long I had been conversing.

Nevertheless I went in with a weight at my heart; a fear of the influence of this man, and a sense of his power.

Once firmly established with the Dowager Queen, I was again in the midst of all the excitement and turmoil of a political life; but what affected me more immediately, in the presence of Ronald Stewart, who I soon heard had, upon the accession of the present King, been nominated Earl of Inveresk.

He was a great favourite with both King and Queen, though he avoided mixing up in any of the disputes or party squabbles; as also anything that could dub him a favourite. Thus he managed to retain the friendship of both, while from the moderation of his temperament, and anxiety for the prosperity of England, he gained the goodwill of both Houses. Above all he had won the regard of my friend, particularly after I had told her one of the secrets of his life, which it would seem had actuated all he did.

A very short time after I had been established in the palace, Titus Oates was brought to trial for perjury; and, as is well known, this was one of the first signs of the temper of the

new government, and fortunately took a right course in punishing a wretch, whose name was the very watchword for all that was contemptible. During the latter years of the past reign he had been pensioned and kept in luxury. His time was now come, and the mob, burning to revenge the death of those now called saints of the holy church, dragged him before a jury, who found him guilty at once; and after consulting as to his punishment, sentenced him to be heavily fined, whipped upon several occasions in public, to be placed in prison for life, and during each year pilloried five times. Truly his judges had ransacked their ingenuity to discover punishments for their detested country-

man, who nobody then attempted to disclaim as an Englishman, though when King James and the Queen began to favour their Irish subjects, a report found much credence, stating him to be an Irishman, than which nothing could be more false.

Lord Stafford's trial was next revised, and both Houses seemed bent upon reversing his sentence; but, fortunately for the tranquillity of the country, this imprudent resolution was abandoned.

A calmness crept over the face of society. Men had grown weary of wrangling, and were disposed to try what peace would do for a while. The storm was, however, only still, not gone, and

this pause seemed to increase its strength, so that when it burst forth, it did so with greater violence than before.

Alice was much with us, and having in a great measure overcome her weakness, I wondered much at her constantly refusing everything that would lead her into public, particularly the Court.

One day, as we sat at work, the Queen, who had often spoken to me of it, asked her the reason she avoided society. Alice flushed up to the eyes, and, looking painfully embarrassed, said—

“I have many reasons, your Majesty; more than I can state.” Then, as if unable to control her feelings, she rose and left the apartment.

“Very strange,” said the Queen;

“what on earth can the child mean? Do you go and ask her—I dare not.”

I followed, and found Alice sitting in her room, calm, but pale; she seemed to divine my intentions, and stopped me immediately, saying—

“Do not ask me now, Mary. If I had desired a comforter I would have chosen you.”

“And may I not try to soothe you,” I asked, putting my arms round her.

“Oh! no, no! it is impossible. I have hoped and prayed, but the wound bleeds still. The God of mercy wills I should suffer. I deserve it, so will not repine. There is a rest, even on earth, if I could only be sure it was a true one.”

She hung her head, and looked inex-

pressibly sad. A chill struck my own heart as she thus alluded to the Roman Catholic Church. I saw I could do no good at that moment, and went reluctantly away, trusting at some other time she might be induced to speak more openly to me upon the subject that gave her so much disquietude.

I found Lord Inveresk with her Majesty, to whom he was retailing some new gossip about the King, who, it appeared, had been driving Sir Charles Sedley's pretty daughter in the Park, and of whose beauty the Court only then consented to rave, though the lady had been there for long; so true was it, nay, *is it*, that royal favour throws a light upon the scene.

When I had given Alice's message, Ronald began telling the Queen of the return of Lord Woodstock (who, after being in honourable exile for some years, was returning to his native land) —a nobleman whose character was one of the darkest in the annals of that age—a profligate of even a more selfish dye than Buckingham, with a notoriety for deceit and profanity of no enviable depth. He added to the graces of a handsome face and polished address the highest talents and every accomplishment of the time, like a serpent fascinating at the same moment as he disgusted.

King Charles had, after a trial of considerable time, during which he held out against reason and the opinions of all

near advisers, consented to give his favourite an appointment in America; in fact, an honourable exile, thus relieving the Court, without exactly punishing the offender.

During his banishment, the country was every now and then electrified by the news of some escapade or adventure worthy of the knights of old rather than the quiet years and spirits of the present.

Fair ladies who had, in spite of his evil nature, rather admired my lord, heard with no small jealousy of his admiration of tropical beauties; so that his memory was kept alive in their hearts, and talked of in secret by their firesides.

And it was at this moment he had been permitted to return.

“By the way,” said Ronald, “now I think of it, I saw the meeting between my Lord Woodstock and your friend Alice’s father; and, by Jove, if it had not been that the Queen’s eyes were upon them, I believe there would have been drawn swords and a duel at the moment. Have you ever heard her speak of Woodstock?” And as I had not, he continued—“I happened to be standing by when Lord Woodstock came up—Sir William suddenly stopped speaking, and, muttering something, grew pale, but I soon saw it was anger, for, as the other swaggered up in his own impertinent way, he wheeled sharp round,

and stood with his back to my lord. This did not seem to satisfy the latter; he returned to the charge, and this time addressed Sir William.

“ ‘ You seem to have forgotten me, Sir William,’ he said, with a sneering laugh; ‘ I trust your family.....’

“ ‘ Say one word more, and by the heaven over us, I strike you where you stand!’ came in a hissing whisper from Sir William’s clenched teeth, and his hand trembled with the intensity of his grasp upon his half-drawn sword. Lord Woodstock bowed superciliously, and muttered something I did not stay to hear, as seeing I was an evesdropper I hurried away.”

Catherine questioned Lord Inveresk

(by which name I was now to think of Ronald) rather closely, I thought, as to whether he knew any cause of misunderstanding between the earls. But he remembered none, as Woodstock had been long out of the country, and before that he was in France.

Finding she could arrive at no elucidation from him, she left the room, going, I supposed, to tell Alice the event.

After we were left alone, my companion talked more seriously than his wont—of life and its duties, inducing me to explain what I thought, and showing his interest when I told him of the freedom of our Church, and the self reliance of each individual.

“I am not a good Christian,” he said, “but I think you could teach me to be one—priests never will.” These words seemed to have a deeper meaning than at first appeared, and I thought of them much, praying that he might be enlightened in the true faith.

CHAPTER XI.

“ At first, tho’ mute, she listened ; like a dream
Seemed all he said, nor could her mind, whose brain
As yet was weak, penetrate half his scheme.”

MOORE.

ALICE now remained more than ever confined to the house, never by any chance going further than the palace garden, and even avoiding visitors, which, when I reproached her for, remonstrating against her ruining her health and spirits, only answered that it was pleasanter for her to live thus. I said no more, tacitly avoiding the only subject upon

which there was not entire confidence between us.

Once or twice I found her in tears when Queen Catherine was alone with her, and was slightly piqued to see that they changed their conversation when I entered; still I knew I was wrong, and overcame this weakness, perhaps the more readily because I was beginning to think much of a subject which soon entirely engrossed and perplexed me.

I saw the influence the Queen was exerting over Alice, and, what vexed me not a little, that Catherine's confessor was more frequently with her, and generally took great pains to occupy Alice's attention. I found she took pleasure

in hearing him speak, and also in reading the books which he lent her. At last, my conviction became so strong, that I could forbear no longer, and finding myself alone with her in the garden, opened my heart to her, beseeching her not to trust in the Romanists.

I saw she was touched, and that a struggle was going on as to the proper course for her to pursue; at last she led me to the grotto, and spoke more openly.

“Mary,” she said, drawing me closer, “you are kinder to me than I deserve. I have been, as it were, your sister for long, and yet I have never spoken to you of the great sorrow of my life. I have often intended to do so, but pride

kept me silent. It is a long story, Mary dear, and painful to me, but you can forgive and forget all that is wrong. Years ago, when I was only seventeen, I went to visit an aunt of my father's, to whose only son I had been almost promised from my birth. I had never seen my cousin, and when my father once spoke of it, he did it so carelessly that I thought it a jest, and cared nothing about it. When I went to stay with my aunt, however, and saw the way I was received, and, more than all, discovered her son was almost an idiot, I became frightened, and wrote to my father, requesting him to take me home. After waiting a long while, I heard from my aunt that he had accepted an em-

bassy to Germany, and would be absent some months, during which I was to remain with her. I forgot to tell you that my aunt had a step-daughter, a few years older than I was. Well, just at this time a gentleman arrived, the owner of a tower and property close to Brankson. He came regularly, and I soon began to feel the influence of his presence. At first, I imagined he came as my cousin Matilda's lover, but he soon undeceived me, telling me he only loved me. I was blinded by my own feelings, and let him guide me as he wished. By his directions I affected attachment to my imbecile lover, while he himself paid equal court to Matilda, thus lulling my aunt's suspicions, and gained a power

over me which I could not shake off. Days and weeks passed on, and Lord Woodstock.....”

“Who?” I exclaimed.

“Lord Woodstock, the man of whom I am speaking,” said Alice, looking at me with a surprised air.

“Why he was the most notorious man at Court,” I said, startled into forgetfulness of her feelings.

“I know it now, dear; but, remember, I met him in the quiet country, and treated as a son by my nearest relation. How could I know his real character, dear? How suspect one I loved with my whole heart. We met at all hours, and always managed to have a portion of the day alone;—he cleverly

silencing all tongues, and blinding even my aunt's eyes. At last the day of reckoning came: an old servant arrived to conduct me to my father, and then my aunt bade me publicly affiance myself to her son; I refused; she insisted; and at last seeing I was determined, left me, to plan a still stronger attack. That evening, as usual, I stole out to meet Woodstock, and in a perfect agony of desperation told him what had occurred, and entreated him to tell me the meaning of my aunt's words—that *he* could not marry me. A strange expression stole over his face, and even then repelled me, as I hung upon his answer. Again I asked, and at length the answer came—

“ ‘ Why can we not love each other

without being married.' The words fell like lead upon my heart. I looked in his face, doubting my ears, and thinking he jested with me, I asked again.

" 'I am married already,' he muttered hoarsely. ' There, you know the worst now.'

" The earth gave way beneath me, and I clung to the seat by which we stood; he touched me, but I struck his hand away. There was a barrier of fire between us. The words ' Married already!' were all I heard.

" I do not yet exactly know how I got home, but for weeks I lay in a raving fever. When I recovered, my aunt told me, with a sort of triumph, that Lord Woodstock had actually been privately

married to her daughter after coming to Branksom. My poor cousin Harry used to sit with me hour after hour, and I soon saw that his whole mind was now filled with the one idea of revenge; it was his one thought, and hourly he meditated upon the means of doing so most effectually.

“The day before I was to leave Branksom, my Lord Woodstock returned somewhat unexpectedly from London, and entering by the garden came upon me unawares. I could not move away, and he seemed too much startled to do so; hesitating for an instant, he was about to turn, when my cousin came up, a bright fire rushed to his eyes, as he sprang forward, and laying his hand upon the

other's shoulder, pushed him down upon his knees, and bade him ask my pardon. Woodstock saw there was no use resisting, and obeyed. This was not enough; he rose to his feet, but my cousin broke forth into a torrent of reproach, hurling the deeds of the past one by one in the traitor's face, until, growing desperate, he struck poor Harry; in one instant he was writhing on the ground, while the madman knelt upon his breast, and held a knife, gleaming in the sunshine. For a moment I thought it was all over, and threw my arms round Harry. By God's help I dragged him back; I had scarcely made him relinquish his hold, when I saw Woodstock level a pistol, and the next a sharp pain in my side, and the report

showed I was hit. The bullet had passed through my side, but poor Harry was safe."

"Was that the reason of your lameness?" I asked, breathlessly.

"Yes, darling.....but you know my story now, Mary, and can perhaps pity me."

Alice leant her head upon my shoulder, I trying to say something to comfort her, and at the same time warn her of his return, so that any day they might meet. Alice's gentle face flushed crimson with passion, as she said, in a low voice—

"If I meet him I shall be revenged. I know *that* of him which will make him tremble before me. I saw poor Matilda upon her deathbed, and....."

Here a footstep in the outer room made her break off suddenly, and I was left to guess the rest.

Alice's story had a depressing influence over me for a long time. I could not hear her voice or look at her without remembering it all, and lived in continual dread lest they should meet, for, although she never in any way alluded to it again, I could see by the stern expression that often stole across her features, and the flush that rose when any stranger entered, that it was her constant thought.

The King and Queen, although professing great interest in and affection for Catherine, seldom or ever visited her, sending messages frequently, but rarely coming personally.

The King, I believed, had much to do, and now more than ever, as rumours began to float about of a threatened rising headed by the Duke of Monmouth. At first little notice was taken, but as the alarm increased, a few soldiers were added to the regiments, and the ships put in better trim, but so quietly was the rebellion managed, that the Duke had landed at Lime, in Dorsetshire, and been proclaimed, before the King was really alive to his danger.

The Duke of Albemarle assembled a regiment in Devon, and marched to Axminster, but, finding his men deeply attached to Monmouth, and ready to change sides upon the least excuse, he

thought it prudent to take them out of the way by retiring.

The rebels reached Taunton unopposed. Here they were received with open arms, and Monmouth found himself at the head of six thousand men, and obliged to decline the services of as many more, from the lowness of his exchequer. This seemed to give him little uneasiness, and, content with his present security, he paid no attention to what was going on; so that the intelligence of the landing of six regiments, recalled from Holland, took him by surprise, and spread consternation amongst his men. He was deserted at the same time by one of his best generals, Fletcher, the master of Saltoun, who,

from an accident arising from his hasty temper, was obliged to leave the troops. They were attacked by the King's men at Sedgwick, and completely defeated.

Monmouth fled, and, after going through various disguises and many dangers, was taken prisoner and carried to London. The whole populace turned out to meet him, receiving him with tears and lamentations, for it is well known that he had made himself thoroughly beloved and admired by the people. He was thrown into the Tower, and executed almost directly as a traitor.

Judge Jeffries was despatched with royal permission to use every means of punishing the rebellious natives of the

west; and ere long the Court and town were ringing with the cruelty and vengeance of this terrible judge.

CHAPTER XII.

“What a tide of woes
Comes rushing on this woful land at once.

* * * *

Gentlemen, we will muster men. If I know
How or which way to order these affairs.”

SHAKESPEARE.

It now appeared, from the success attending King James's plans, that England would soon regain the position she had lost during the easy and inglorious reign of his predecessor.

From our retirement, Queen Catherine and I watched the tide of events with great anxiety, and mine was much

increased by the affection I had for my Church which King James despised, while he furthered everything connected with the Romanist faith, even requesting parliament to abolish the *Test* law, to enable him to forward his interests.

While these public events occupied so much of our attention, a drama was enacting around me that almost made me forget even this—the threatened fate of my country.

I said Alice had been yielding much to the influence of the Queen's confessor, and though I had thought but little of it at first, my fears began to be awakened, and at last, to my intense sorrow, I felt convinced that ere long she would adopt the Romanist creed.

The course before me was a difficult one. She never gave me an opportunity to converse with her upon the subject, so seeing nothing else for it, I let Lord Carmarthen know. He heard it with infinite pain, and questioned Alice, but only learnt from her that his influence was gone. Walter wrote, remonstrating warmly, but in vain; opposition seemed to hasten matters.

In a few days Alice made her public choice of the Church, and became so enrapt in her religious works, that I seldom saw her; still, there was a vacillation in her plans and deportment that puzzled me, giving me now and then hopes that she had already seen the error of her way. To me, however,

she never spoke seriously, not even when I asked her if she felt happier now; her only answer was to jest at my anxiety, or tell me she could look after her own interests better than any one for her.

My astonishment was complete when she told me she was appointed maid of honour to the Queen. I felt naturally surprised at her thus wilfully seeking the presence of Lord Woodstock, and asked her the question.

“I am the wronged,” she said; “let him beware.”

So I felt still more uneasy, and would most gladly have seen her ill again, to save her from what I feared would lead to trouble and sorrow.

She left us, however, and her new duties taking up so much of her time, I saw her but seldom, though the excitement created by her beauty and talents reached us through Ronald Stewart, and even he for a time spoke so warmly that.....but no matter, dear reader. I was a woman, and felt like one.

When I noticed Ronald's admiration for Alice, I avoided speaking of her. fearful lest I should show how much I felt, and he, feeling guilty, did so likewise. Thus it was that for a length of time I heard no more of her.

My heart reproached me afterwards for my distrust and jealousy, particularly when I saw her again, and heard her account of her own heart.

It would seem that the desire of revenging herself upon Lord Woodstock had led her to this act, and as far as events had gone, her wish was being gratified. He was her slave, her servant, anything that she willed, seeming only to exist in the light of her smile,—and a more capricious smile could scarcely have been chosen.

Poor Alice was miserable, living upon a false excitement, and with a passion burning at her heart, sapping the spring of life itself. She passed day after day, running headlong in the same race. Poor child! as she lay sobbing in my arms, begging me to let her sleep there for an hour, I could have wept with her, but my tears were held back. She had

spoken of Ronald as her friend, and my love grew cold at my heart.

She saw my restraint, and besought me to tell her what caused it, but I could not; I was ashamed of it, and yet I cherished it until I almost hated myself for this very weakness.

The Queen took much interest in all that occurred at Court, and though she said nothing, I knew she was watching an opportunity of retiring to her own country.

Lord Inveresk brought us daily intelligence of what went on, so that we seemed to live almost in the world, although in reality we seldom went beyond the gardens.

Though we were at peace, the world

was convulsed by faction, and the rashness of King James threw the Protestant Church into consternation, for not content with privately favouring the Romanists, he took every opportunity of distinguishing them honourably, before and in place of the Protestants. Strange as it may appear to those who know the Scotch as they are now, there were more converts to the Romanists, or, as a great historian says, the Court religion, in that country than in England—the example set by the Earls of Perth and Murray was followed by many of their countrymen. To all appearance Scotland was to be essentially the King's country.

In Ireland matters took a darker turn.

General Talbot had been rewarded by the Earldom of Tyrconnell, and placed at the head of the government, a post by no means to be courted, as week after week fresh rumours of the disaffection in that country came across the Channel: the people, it was said, were arming in all parts, and taking flight by hundreds to England.

It was in vain to preach patience and care to James: completely led away by what he deemed religion, he cared little for the life or liberty of his subjects, and at length almost paralyzed the country by breaking out openly against the heads of the Church.

The bishops were by his order brought to trial; the jury dare not refuse to sit

upon them, but unanimously pronounced a verdict of acquittal.

The birth of the Prince of Wales shattered the strengthening hopes of the Protestant party, and brought to a stop their correspondence with the Prince of Orange, who, with his Queen, looked with a covetous eye upon the throne of England, and took no small pains to ingratiate themselves with those Englishmen that fell in their way.

A constant intercourse was kept alive between the Hague and the disaffected party in England. Stories would occasionally be whispered, and letters discovered, that kept the King in continual anxiety.

The health of my dear friend, the

Queen Catherine, began to give me much uneasiness. She grew tired of her confinement, voluntary though it had been, and took a fancy to driving in the parks.

This was a relief to me, as now that she kept me so constantly in her presence, I felt it rather an irksome life, and often longed ardently for the fresh air and wild hills again.

A whole year passed by as drearily as well can be imagined. There was absolutely nothing save *looking on* at the history of our country to enliven us.

Lord Inveresk's visits had been seldom, his time being occupied in more important duties. When he did come, I felt happier for days after, and unconsciously

let myself dream a bright dream of happiness, such as I thought I had lost for ever. Yet it was all uncertainty, and I tormented myself by all kinds of perverse imaginations; blinding myself by this to the truth, which every one else round me had seen so long.

It happened that at the close of this dreary year, Ronald Stewart was despatched upon an embassy to France. When he returned, he hastened to us, and gave us a merry description of the French Court. His manner towards me made my heart beat faster.

As he talked of home, and looked at me, I felt the blood rush to my face. Nor was I less confused when the Queen,

saying she would rest awhile, left us alone.

The door had scarcely closed, when Ronald rose, and coming up to me, put a little casket in my hand, saying—

“ This is a gift for you, Mary. Will you wear it for my sake?”

There was something in the tone of his voice that made my hand tremble as I took the velvet case, and began to open it; but ere I did so, he laid his hand on mine, and said—

“ Promise, Mary; promise first.”

And I said, “ I will.”

He helped me to unlatch it, and raised the coronet it contained, placing it upon my head. Then leading me to a mirror, he said—

“ It is a Countess’s coronet, Mary, and belonged to my mother. Will you wear it?”

The room seemed to swim round with me; a strange sense of happiness rushed into my heart; his arm encircled me, his eyes gazing into mine, where I suppose he found an answer, for he kissed me, and whispered—

“ Thanks and blessings upon you, darling. I am the happiest man in England.”

CHAPTER XIII.

“There’s a bliss beyond all that the minstrel has told,
When two that are linked in one heavenly tie,
With heart never changing, and brow never cold,
Love on through all ills, and love on till they die.”

MOORE.

Now began a new life for me, a life in which self was lost sight of in all absorbing love and devotion to another.

My very soul seemed animated and renewed—by-gone years faded away as a dream, serving rather, from their many trials, to make the present more delightful; and when I thought, as I often did of the dark days of my youth, I owned

that they had been sent with a purpose, for, as a storm purifies the atmosphere, so, spiritually, these troubles had left my heart holier and happier withal, though I felt lonely and depressed doing my duty, because it was my duty, not my pleasure.

I felt pleasure in nothing—yet all this void was filled—the storms, darkness, and weariness faded, my old heart passed away, and all things became new.

Ronald knew my heart, even as I did myself, and I never hid a thought from him.

There was no one to consult as to my marriage, save her who had planned it long ago, and as events thickened round us, the throne tottered upon its founda-

tion, we thought it advisable to hasten matters; so my wedding-day was fixed at once, leaving me but a short period in which I considered myself affianced.

It is a strange thing, that step from freedom to the gentle and endearing enslavement of an engagement, to feel your actions, nay, your very thoughts, are no longer your own, but are, by right, another's, and everything you do reflects upon that other.

The preparations for my wedding amused Queen Catherine, and forced her once more into public.

I myself resolutely declined appearing at Court, although King James, after congratulating Ronald upon his good

fortune in obtaining such a bride, requested him to urge me to appear.

Alice, too, came and begged me to do so, bringing me word from the Queen that my presence would gratify her. Still I refused, and quieted Ronald's petitions by saying I would go when I had a right to wear the pearl coronet. So what could he do but give me my own way?

I said before I had seen little or nothing of Alice during all this time, but now she again came to me as of old, and it was then I heard some account of what had happened to her during the interval. Upon her return to Court she had for a period followed the prin-

ciple I had been told of before with respect to my Lord Woodstock.

After some time she slightly relaxed in her demeanour, and allowed him to converse with her, gradually appearing to be interested, until he, growing confident of his success, saw fit to propose himself in marriage. Now was the moment for victory.

So well did she feign happiness, that, without committing herself, she let him believe his proposal would be accepted.

Acting upon this, he made preparations for the wedding, taking care to make everyone aware of what he considered a great conquest.

Alice steadily avoided meeting him in private for some time, and taking

an opportunity in the presence of the Court, she awaited his approach, and openly refused his salutation, doing it with such an air of disdain and contempt, that a smile was seen even upon the King's face, in whose favour my lord had ingratiated himself considerably.

The scene was put a stop to by Alice's father, who till then had remained silent, but now spoke out, and in the most eloquent terms appealed to the King for justice for the deserted wife and child of my Lord Woodstock.

The King was startled, my lord grew deadly pale, and, swearing an angry oath that he would be revenged, abruptly left the presence.

The next day he received the King's

permission to retire to his country seat for a time; and Alice continued the reigning beauty, admired and respected by bad and good, and once more for a time my friend; yet, in spite of her seeming gaiety, I learned that she had determined on retiring to a convent, and, fondly as I loved her, this news distressed me much, both for my own and her father's sake, and I was deeply affected when he came to me and begged, even with tears, that I would endeavour to convince her of the errors of the Church which she had chosen.

Alas! I knew it full well, and had wept many a tear when I thought of Ronald belonging to it, but I trusted my influence would overcome, and that I might make him one with me in faith, although

I was obliged to keep this carefully shut up in my heart, until the time should arrive when I could say—"Thy God is my God, where thou livest I shall live, and where thou diest I shall die."

My wedding was fixed for the first week in September. Softly and peaceably the days passed in the home I was in; not a breath of the storms which were even then hourly growing fiercer, and threatening the country, penetrated within its precincts.

Every day brought the same happiness—a visit from Ronald Stewart and a little more consultation about something connected with the important day.

I noticed too that the Queen Dowager grew brighter and happier, but soon

heard the true cause, in that she had determined to go back to Portugal, where she would meet with comfort and respect.

In this country she had met with neither; and, strange as it may seem, there had of late arisen a storm of calumnies. The skeletons of old stories had been forced before the public, and long-forgotten gossip awakened from its sleep; in fact, men began to pity King Charles now that he was dead, finding out, according to their own version, that he had great excuse for his profligate behaviour; nay, so openly were these scandalous libels pronounced, that the Queen Dowager was publicly insulted in the streets of London.

Unable to endure the pain thus caused her, she gave up her drives, and remained a close prisoner until the time she should be permitted to seek an asylum in her native land.

Thus the preparations for my wedding were slightly retarded, and saddened by the sorrows of the Queen, who felt most deeply the malignity that seemed to pursue her through everything, and well knew to whom she ought to attribute this continued persecution; so that when the Princess Anne paid her hypocritical visits of condolence, she invariably refused to receive her, fearful, she told me, of giving that lady the gratification of seeing that she felt and appreciated her underhand revenge.

At last the important day arrived. The sun shone forth bright and beautiful as the middle of summer—not a cloud dimmed the clear blue sky, or threw a shadow over my hopes of happiness, and when Ronald clasped me in his arms and called me his “own dear wife,” my heart rose in thanks to Him who had granted even more than I had dared to hope for.

At the moment, I think I felt a keener pang for the loss of my dear father and mother than ever before—the loss of not having them to participate in my happiness. In my sorrow I had felt it a sort of relief that they had been spared from sharing in it, but now, in the fulness of my joy, I found there was a dreary blank without them—a void I could never

fill up, as the greater my own happiness the more prominent would the want of their participation become.

But I am talking sadly, when I ought to be making the most of this sunshine—the bright days of my wedded life.

For a time, Ronald devoted himself almost entirely to me, never leaving me for an instant, but this was not permitted to last.

News of the landing of the Prince of Orange reached us even in the quiet retreat we had chosen, and, utterly confounded by the realization of his worst fears, Ronald made up his mind to proceed to London.

At first he tried to prevail upon me to remain behind; this, however, I strenu-

ously opposed. What could I do away from him? Why should not I share his dangers? I had nothing in the world to live for but him, and my place was at his side in weal or woe. My husband listened to my entreaties, and consented to my accompanying him.

Time being of the greatest importance, he consulted me as to the possibility of riding the whole way, and although it was years since I had mounted a horse, I trusted my strength would hold out, and I advised him to do so; but I had overrated my powers, and ere I had travelled twenty miles I was so much fatigued that I could not proceed.

Ronald would have risked all, and stayed to accompany me in a coach,

which we found was to be procured, but I would not permit him to run the risk of being absent when every mile we proceeded spoke more truly of the confusion everything was in.

Troops of disorganized and half drunken soldiers travelled about demanding accommodation in the name of the King; riotous labourers were banding together, and anxious to partake of any advantage which might occur, hastened to Devonshire to meet the invading army.

All these things increased Ronald's dread of leaving me alone, but his first duty was to his King.

I endeavoured to appear cheerful, so as to keep up his spirits, and at last

succeeded so far as to persuade him to pursue his journey alone.

I had with me my man servant and my tiring woman.

We set out an hour or two after my husband, and reached our next resting-place without interruption.

CHAPTER XIV.

“The King of Heaven forbid, our lord the King
Should so with civil and uncivil arms
Be rushed upon.”

SHAKESPEARE.

WE had scarcely been established there, when an immense body of men rode into the town, shouting “William of Orange!” and “Down with the Papists!”

No one, however, echoed their cry, and, meeting with neither opposition nor encouragement, they dispersed to the various inns, and seemed determined to enjoy the good things of this world.

I was watching at the window, when an officer cantered into the yard, at the head of twelve or thirteen men, armed to the teeth. He was a very handsome man, and mounted upon a splendid charger, whose fiery disposition showed the command his rider had over him.

As he came toward the inn-porch a little child ran across the road, startling the horse, who began to rear and plunge frightfully; this the rider bore with seeming carelessness for a while, but not appearing to regain any power over the animal by his patience, he drew his sword, and struck him between the ears with the hilt.

Down came horse and rider, the latter evidently not hurt, for he sprang to his

legs immediately, while the poor animal lay stunned and trembling on the ground.

His master seized the bridle, and pulled it passionately, all the time swearing loudly at the helpless brute; but hearing something like a laugh from some one near him, he turned round, and, with a terrible curse, inquired what he laughed at.

The man stood silent for an instant, then raising his head, he answered quietly—

“At you, my lord.”

This unexpected rejoinder for a moment silenced the angry captain, but the next, with a voice actually trembling with passion, he demanded the soldier's name.

Again the answer silenced him, and even made his flushed face grow pale. Apparently driven frantic by passion, he pulled out a pistol, and, levelling it at him, would have fired, had not an officer sprung forward and laid his hand upon the weapon, too late, however, to do more than alter the course, the bullet passing high over the man's head, who brought his hand to his head with a military salute, and said in a loud, clear voice—

“Thanks, my lord, for this second trial of my courage.”

As the man spoke a loud cheer burst from the troop, who, in spite of their commander's scowls, crowded round their comrade to congratulate him on his escape.

The discomfited captain, forgetting his horse, had in the meantime sulkily approached the inn, and I heard him come up stairs with a heavy step, and enter the room adjoining mine.

He was immediately followed by the officer who had prevented him committing murder, who seemed to adopt the plan of letting his passionate friend's wrath subside a little, as I heard his footstep pacing up and down the room, but for a long time no one spoke.

"Why, in the devil's name, did you stop me shooting that fellow?" at last burst from the captain.

"To prevent you being a murderer, and worse—you know what," answered the other, in a low voice.

“Prevent what, you foolish boy? What harm would I have done? No more than in hanging a dog that snarled at my heels. Murderer, forsooth! I wish to God I had nothing worse than that would have been to account for. You’ll scarcely think when you are my age that knocking over an impertinent trooper can be called by such a strong name. Egad! you are wiser than I am.”

“I thought the man said his name was Lovel; if I mistake not your.....”

“Silence!” roared the other, “or, by Heaven, I’ll shoot thee too! Am I to be dictated to by a stripling like you? Go and see to the horses; and listen. Send Lovel to me. I had better do so. He might be dangerous now.”

All was now silent. I watched the young officer go across the yard to the stables, where the soldiers were busily engaged rubbing down their horses.

A short time elapsed, during which my next door neighbour continued his hasty walk.

The soldier, Lovel, came towards the house, whistling carelessly. I was not the only one who saw him. I heard the footstep in the next room stop, and the captain (as I supposed him) exclaim—

“Damnation! he is her very image. Oh! that I could shoot them both.” And he ground his teeth with passion, dashing a chair out of his way, as he recommenced his walk.

I began to think it was not right for

me to listen, but what could I do? The house was full; they told me I must remain where I was; and I soon became so deeply interested that the idea that I was an evesdropper faded away.

“Close the door,” were the next words I heard.

“Now, Mr. Lovel,” said the captain, “I have sent for you to inquire the cause of your mirth.”

There was a pause, and then a deep voice replied—

“I was amused, my lord, partly by the situation of your lordship, and partly by the absurd display of temper.”

“By God! how dare you!” broke in the other, stamping his foot.

“Dare! Lord Woodstock,” thundered

the soldier in a voice that made me start even more than the name. “Dare! you say. I, Edward Lovel, ask you how you dare insult me? Answer me, coward, liar, and traitor, as you are—answer me but this—which is the honest man of us two, George Lord Woodstock or Edward Lovel? I have no title, but I have a reputation that you cannot harm—more, I have a sister, and, by all the powers of Heaven, I will see her righted—see her boy owned as your rightful heir before all England. Ay! turn away and gnash your teeth—I have sworn it. I told the Lady Alice Fenton; but, remember, she only required a hint. She had a revenge to accomplish, and so have I—so have I!”

Lovel stopped speaking, and for a time I heard nothing—both were silent.

How long this would have lasted I know not, but a troop of cavalry rode into the court, and demanded quarters in King William's name, and, eager to hear any news, I rushed to the window. This was the second time I had been brought into immediate contact with the rebellion, and the words made my soul thrill, every pulse throbbing with excitement. I leant forward and listened breathlessly, while no idea of my own danger flashed upon me. I cared not for anything at the moment, for in the leader of the party I recognized my Lord Cornbury, grandson of my kind and loyal friend Lord Clarendon.

While I was still watching them with

intense interest, the door opened very gently, and the hostess crept in on tip-toe, shutting the door after her.

“Madam, we are lost. These troopers are for the Prince of Holland. They have proclaimed him King through the town, and now come here. We are lost if they discover you, my lady; and, oh! grief and sorrow it is to my heart to have such men in my house.”

“Is there no corner I can hide in until they take their departure?” I asked, thinking of my poor husband.

“Alas! no place but this room. If you remain perfectly still, my lady, you may escape notice; lock and bolt the door, and at daybreak, or before, if you wish, I will come, and you can continue

your journey; for oh! madam! I love the King." Then kissing my hand, and repeating her devotion to her King, she left me, and hastened away to prepare a feast for her unwelcome guests.

I had not been long alone when I heard footsteps on the stairs, and loud voices made me aware of the approach of some of the officers. I heard them enter the adjoining room, and greet Lord Woodstock with familiarity.

A perfect chorus of boisterous conversation succeeded, from which the only thing I could gather was a contempt for King James and his adherents. Once they mentioned my husband's name, and my blood tingled as I hung eagerly on the reply. It was this—

“King William has put him down as one of those to be taken prisoner. He is dangerous, for many reasons.”

“The beauty of his wife most of all,” laughed one.

“Oh, no, the length of her purse,” said another, while a voice I recognised as Lord Cornbury’s, said—

“Lady Inveresk is a friend of mine, and by Heaven nothing shall harm her or her’s; she was a ward of my poor grandfather’s.”

I murmured thanks, and sat wrapt in the meditations these words had aroused.

So engrossed was I that I was only recalled by hearing Alice Fenton’s name shouted out as a toast, and it being the

custom of that time for the proposer to offer something as a sort of sacrifice to the name, I heard much merriment at the offering now made, which was followed by a story told by one of them about Sir Charles Sedley, who, having on a very handsome neckcloth, was obliged to follow his host's example and commit it to the flames, much to his disgust. Sir Charles did not forget the occurrence, but waiting patiently for his revenge. He asked a select company to dine, gave them as a toast a reigning beauty, and then turning, called to a doctor to draw a tooth as an offering. (It was a tooth, he had long designed having extracted, and took this opportunity of putting the loyalty of his friends to the test.)

As darkness closed in I became weary, and fell into a light sleep, broken every now and then by the shouts and laughter of the soldiers.

About midnight I awoke. All was still. I went to the window, opened it, and gazed out upon the court, with a sense of companionship in the regular tread of the sentries; but I had not listened long when a voice close at my elbow reached me.

It was that of Lord Woodstock at the open window of the adjoining room. He spoke as if in answer to some question, saying—

“Why can you not make up your mind; the lady has deeply injured me, and I only require her disgrace. We

must go cautiously to work, or we shall have the whole rabble of priests about our ears."

"What do you mean?" asked the other; "what has this to do with Rome?"

"Simply that she has joined that Church, and means to retire to a convent."

"By Jove!" exclaimed the other, "Alice Fenton a nun—why she is the prettiest woman in London—what put this religious fit into the dear little one's head?"

"Disappointment in some love affair," said Lord Woodstock, with a sneer.

The other laughed loudly, saying,—
"By the Lord she paid you out—you are quits now."

“A truce to your foolery,” exclaimed Lord Woodstock, angrily; “we cannot talk here all night. I heard by mere accident that the girl was on her way to some old relative in Wales. My plan is to take her prisoner under pretence of her loyalty, and when I have her under lock and key at Woodstock, I can make my own terms.”

“I thought the days of knight-errantry were over. Why, if you had her to-morrow, don’t you think her father would find her out; her brother, too, by God! a very fire-eater; and since Montgomery gave him command of his Scotch savages, there is no standing him. I tell you what, these two will give us more trouble than any half dozen of the rest, for, true

Protestants though they are, they will stick by the old King."

"A rare virtue now, my Lord," exclaimed another voice; and immediately added, "your swords, gentlemen: I accuse you of aiding and abetting the usurper, William of Orange, and arrest you in King James's name."

There was a considerable commotion, but above it all I heard the same voice again,—

"Nay, gentlemen, resistance is of no use, your men have returned to their duty."

"What the devil do you mean?" shouted Lord Woodstock, "my men are....."

"With the King's true soldiers, my

lord. They joined us an hour ago, under as brave a trooper as ever crossed a saddle, Captain Lovel."

"Damnation!" muttered Woodstock, through his clenched teth. "By God, he shall pay for this! Stand off!" he yelled; "off on your peril!" as the soldiers of the King advanced. "Here is my sword, General, only keep your Irish villains off."

"My men are not villains, and will conduct you with due respect to your quarters."

In a few minutes the landlord entered, followed by a general officer, who, from his uniform, I saw belonged to the Irish troops, but I was scarcely prepared for the courtesy of his salutation and

gentle address. Apologising for his intrusion, he begged to know who I was, where I was going, and in what way he could best further my plans. On hearing who I was, he at once threw aside his stately and stiff manner, and making a low bow, said he had much pleasure in making my acquaintance, as he knew my husband well, and valued the honour as all true men must. I now felt more at ease, and asked him to tell me all that was going on.

“ You must have been in a very secluded place, madam,” he said, “ not to have heard what the country has been ringing with. Your husband will reach town just in time for the great council summoned by his Majesty, and at which

Lord Inveresk's advice will be most useful."

I acknowledged the compliment, and asked eagerly for more news, but I was hastily cut short by the trumpets sounding. The General looked somewhat angrily out of the window, then waving his hand to one of the troopers, bade them wait.

"Now, madam," said he, turning to me, "pray decide—will you accept my escort as far as Salisbury, where the King is to be directly, or take the chance of pursuing your own journey at leisure? There is little time to think of it. My name is Sarsfield, madam, and by the honour of my country I offer you a safe escort."

There was no necessity to repeat his kind offer—gladly accepting it, in a few minutes I was in the midst of his troopers, and, for the first time in my life, participating in the pomp and pride of war.

We proceeded very slowly in consequence of the foot soldiers; and further, having to examine into the temper of the inhabitants of the towns and villages we passed through, occupied much time.

On the road we were met by a trooper, who informed us that a party of men under one Campbell, were in our front. Sarsfield seemed to think light of it, and ordering his men to prepare, rode at their head himself, and charged down the highway, where it was said the

Prince's adherents were stationed. After a gallop of about a mile they came upon them. Campbell, with a few men, was posted at the end of a little valley; the rest of his troop were placed on each side of the road, sheltered by the hedges. Sarsfield was riding a pretty little white horse, and galloped forward in front of his men, until he came close to the rebels.

Campbell spoke first, demanding who they were, to which Sarsfield replied—

“For King James.”

“And I for the Prince of Orange,” shouted Campbell, at which Sarsfield, turning to his men, said something in his native tongue, which made them all laugh and join in a wild cheer.

Campbell, a hot-brained highlander, drew his sword, and waving it over his head, shouted "Fire!"

A shower of bullets hailed down from the hedges, and laid many of the Irish troopers in the dust; nay, thrice did this deadly shower rain upon their devoted heads, before they could get at their concealed enemies. They stood the fire with the utmost steadiness, and then charged, sword in hand, on their foes, and would soon have carried all before them, if an alarm had not been started that a reinforcement was hastening up to join the Prince's troops; as the report (which was too true) spread, they paused for a moment in their victorious career,

and Sarsfield, seeing that a further advance would only sacrifice his men, drew them off, and we all retired together.

CHAPTER XV.

“So shall I taste
At the first the very worst of fortune's might,
And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
Compared with loss of thee, will not seem so.”

SHAKESPEARE.

THE next day an escort arrived to take charge of me as far as Salisbury. There I found the King and Court assembled, but evidently all in the greatest confusion. My dear kind husband alone appeared to retain anything like coolness, and earnestly advised the King to concede to the requests of the people. James was, however, completely ruled by what he

deemed affection for his religion, and turned a deaf ear to every advice contrary to what he considered the most regal course. A few days of the most intense anxiety passed slowly by. My husband was scarcely ever with me, and I was almost hourly with the Queen, who all at once had conceived a warm friendship for me. During these days the Prince's army was slowly but surely augmenting its numbers, and advancing closer to our position. Every day, nay, almost every hour, brought intelligence of some defection amongst those we had counted on in the north. Newcastle and Hull were the first to fall away, but the greatest blow was the fact that Bristol, which, from its mercantile importance and situa-

tion was looked upon as second only to London, had voluntarily received the Lord Shrewsbury; and the Bishop, not content with passive acquiescence, summoned a meeting in the cathedral, and prayed and preached for the success of the Prince's arms. I think the news of the rebellious proceedings of Bishop Trelawney was a great means of making the King decide on leaving Salisbury. The Bishop being a man of great power and influence, there seemed no doubt that his example would form the groundwork of a general movement, even among those churchmen who were most favourably inclined.

Thus, when intelligence was brought that the invading army was within a short distance of Salisbury, King James

would listen to no remonstrances, but gave orders to march at once to London.

For the next few hours, the whole town was a mass of confusion; horses and carriages hastening to and fro, blocking up the roads in every direction, the troopers assembling in the open space round the stately old cathedral, and from time to time the trumpets rung out over the tumult of voices. At last the King and Queen, accompanied by the infant Prince and the lords and ladies in waiting, commenced their journey. We reached Andover in the afternoon, and, as the King had determined to keep us there for the night, we had a short rest before us. Much fatigued with her journey, the Queen retired almost imme-

diately upon her arrival, and soon after dining King James followed her; so, for the first time since leaving Gloucestershire, my husband and I were enabled to spend a few hours together. Anxious to avoid the bustle of the town, we walked beyond its precincts, and, noticing a path strike off into the woods, we gladly turned into it. The path skirted the highway, but was completely concealed from those passing by the underwood and hedge intervening; so, finding a pleasant green bank, we sat down to talk. We had many things to consult of, and the moon shone full upon us ere we thought of the lapse of time. As we were rising to return, the clatter of horses' feet reached us. Anxious to see

who rode so late, my husband bade me crouch down beside him at a thin part of the bushes. We could look out upon the road, which lay like a silver thread in the bright moonlight. We were not kept in suspense long; presently I could distinguish several horsemen; they approached rapidly, and when within a few yards slackened speed, and rode leisurely on, conversing. The two foremost were at opposite sides of the road, and, as they passed, one asked the distance they must go. There was a peculiar accent in his voice that bespoke a foreigner, and my husband clenched my hand fiercely. As the man replied, and the first speaker exclaimed—"Est il possible?" Ronald half rose, and uttered an

oath aloud. The rustling made by his movement, slight as it was, alarmed the travellers, and the man who had answered the first speaker, shouted—"Who goes there?" Of course no answer was given, and my husband made me lie down on the grass.

"Halt!" shouted the same voice; "what was that, sergeant?" "A man's voice, my lord," was the reply. "Form—present—fire!" were the startling orders; and before I could do more than grasp my husband's hand about a dozen bullets crashed over my head. I shall never forget the long, deep breath that broke from Ronald's breast, as he exclaimed—"Safe, by God!"

I suppose the travellers were satisfied

with their kind intentions, and, imagining they had done their work, galloped off.

But it was not until the last echo of their tread had died away that I ventured to raise my head.

“Who was it?” I asked, breathlessly, as Ronald put his arm round me.

“Prince George and Churchill,” was his astounding reply. It was indeed the case. They had left the King.

Ronald found James employed at his devotions, utterly unsuspecting of the treachery at work so near him. At first he resolutely refused any belief of such heartbreaking news ; but when an examination of their chambers convinced him, his tears broke forth, and, with a passion he had not yet displayed, he

cursed the Prince and his leader, for such my Lord Churchill was.

Churchill's character puzzled his contemporaries, and disgusted those who, in after years, could understand his motives and life. Proud to a fault, he would yet lie and cringe for a shilling, daily and hourly forfeiting his honour for some paltry acquisition of seeming power, and all this, while his superlative cunning, aided most effectually by his wife, blinded the eyes of those he cheated. In the present case, perceiving the fall of James at hand, he forgot his debt of gratitude, and hastened to offer his allegiance to the usurper; but, not content with this hostile movement, he must needs take an underhand measure, and

secure a friend in case of a change in the world's opinions, and carry with him his tool and friend—Prince George of Denmark.

Such is man's sincerity.

The first intelligence that met us upon our arrival in London, was the flight of the Princess Anne.

This was, apparently, the climax of the King's troubles. At the moment of Churchill's desertion he had wept more from anger than grief, but now it was heartrending to see his anguish, and hear his repeated exclamation—

“God help me! my children have forsaken me!”

By degrees he learnt the full particulars of her flight, her anxiety to escape

before his arrival, and the degrading incidents that attended this proceeding; and suddenly recovering himself, he sternly bade those around him to remain silent upon the subject, and, going himself to her apartments, burnt everything that bespoke her presence, and, locking the door, threw the key into the garden.

That evening the King sat in council, and, in spite of the anguish gnawing at his heart, spoke rationally upon the emergency of the moment.

A meeting of the Lords was determined on for the following day, at which he again presided; and though it might have touched any heart to note the havoc one night's agony had wrought

upon his face, he received no token of sympathy.

Of the few he believed would have stood by him to the last, the Lord Clarendon was one (the successor to my dear and honoured friend), but he, to the amazement of friends and foes, stood up, and, seeming to disregard all reverence for his sovereign's presence, exclaimed bitterly against Popery and the government, asserting that, in spite of his pretence to the contrary, the King was even then raising a troop in London.

In vain did James indignantly deny the imputation. Clarendon's mind was made up; he had already gone too far to draw back; and, confident in his own influence over those still in semblance

faithful, he boldly threw a doubt upon the King's veracity.

I never saw my husband so roused as when he recounted the above scene, and told me of the insults heaped upon the fallen King, whose misfortunes awoke in his breast an affection and pity he had never felt till now. Day and night his hand and head were at work. He spent hours in talking to the soldiers, exciting them to stand firm to their King; but what could one voice do against millions.

Time went on. William's troops were advancing on London. The very menials of the palace began to show disrespect for the already dethroned King, whose only safety seemed in an instantaneous flight. But this he refused, and

with a perseverance unusual to one of his family, he persisted in awaiting the arrival of the Prince, but willingly consented to let his Queen and child seek an asylum in France. Sadly against my inclination I was chosen to accompany her Majesty, but my husband represented to me the comfort he would feel when assured of my safety, so I consented.

CHAPTER XVI.

“Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been
A sound which makes us linger—yet farewell!”

BYRON.

“Farewell! There is a boding sadness in the word
Few can disguise, and everyone must feel.”

WE departed from London in the midst of the most fearful storm I remember to have seen, and through it all the poor Queen sobbed and bemoaned her fate, while the poor infant, frightened by the rain and wind, screamed so piteously, that

we were forced to hold a handkerchief over his mouth, lest attention should be thus attracted to our movements. It was a great relief when we reached the ship appointed to carry us to our destination; and seeing that my time was completely engrossed by the Queen, I could not dwell upon my own state, but was obliged to listen to her lamentations, and forget my own.

We were received by Louis himself, and installed in a wing of the palace until suitable arrangements were made at St. Germain; and then commenced my real trials.

The mirth of those near me, in which the Queen soon joined, with apparently utter disregard of her late grief, saddened

me still more; but being unable to withdraw myself from these scenes, on account of my attendance upon her Majesty, I felt doubly disheartened, and longed earnestly for the end of the hourly weakening hold of James upon the throne. True, I had only beggary and exile to expect, but my heart would be at rest. What did I care for the pomps and riches of the world, in comparison to happiness and rest?

It was with the greatest reluctance I took any part in the daily fêtes and pageants of that gayest of all Courts, feeling my pale, woe-begone face, upon which I could not put a mask of smiles, was quite out of place. It was with much astonishment I saw her Majesty,

Queen Mary, throw aside the stiffness she had assumed in England, and seeming to forget her dignity as well as her supposed sorrows, join heart and hand in every amusement that took place.

Days followed each other slowly, and no English news reached me for such a length of time, that suspense became almost intolerable, when it was relieved by a messenger arriving from King James, with intelligence that, in attempting to escape, he had been seized, and was now a prisoner. The messenger also informed us that the guards had at last declared for the Prince of Orange, who was even now actually in London. We had scarcely heard the intelligence, when crowds of

Roman Catholic refugees arrived, and made my blood run cold with the description they gave of the state of London—how the mob paraded the public streets, breaking open the chapels, and ransacking the houses of any one suspected of Papacy. A few days of intense anxiety followed, during which my very life seemed departing, and I felt quite helpless, and almost hopeless, utterly prostrate with fear. But God was merciful to me, and after a week of agony, a voice sounded in my ears whose tones brought me to life again. My husband was with me, safe, and, what was as precious, had preserved his honour to the end, having accompanied the King in his last and successful escape.

I cannot attempt to tell an accurate history of the time we spent at the French Court, a Court the history of which is so well known, that to say that my husband and I were among its honoured guests, is to tell all that happened. And yet, with all the show of hospitality and gaiety, there was a chord jarring in our hearts—we were exiles, and dependent upon the bounty of a foreigner—so that when an opportunity seemed to serve, and deputations from those who remained faithful in Ireland came over, my husband lent his voice to a number who advised an attempt to regain the forfeited kingdom, and even volunteered himself to go over to ascertain the feeling of the Scotch.

I was again left alone—this time the parting was even more trying than before—but he had taught me to feel with him in regard to his duty, and although I expected to be a mother before I could by any possibility see him again, I parted with him as cheerfully as I could, and having obtained their Majesties' permission to retire from attendance, went to a pretty little place not far distant, where I could be alone as much as I pleased.

A fortnight after my dear husband went, my baby was born, and no one but a mother can understand the feeling with which I gazed at my firstborn; and from my inmost soul thanked God for His precious gift, praying for strength to

deserve the trust. Hour after hour, as I lay weak and helpless, I looked at the innocent little creature beside me, and pictured to my mind what his after life might be, anticipating the pride with which my husband would greet his little son.

Oh, how I longed for his return, and day after day trusted to gain strength! But, alas! that strength came not. Weeks went by, and I still lay prostrate. Doctors came and went, and talked to me and of me, but all shook their heads, and said they hoped time would enable me to overcome my weakness. Full of the expected return of my beloved, and the daily improvement in my darling baby, I thought little of my own case,

saving a feeling of disappointment that I could not be up and stirring to welcome him home.

At last he came, and as he clasped me in his arms my bliss was complete. With a pride I still feel the echo of thrilling in my heart, I pointed to the rosy little face nestling at my side, and watched his as he bent, half in curiosity, half in wonder, over our child. When he had leisure to tell me of his adventures, it seemed Scotland had but slight hopes of any success in the cause of the exiled king, so that the wisest measure appeared to take the advice given by Lord Tyrconnell, and proceed to Ireland immediately.

After much deliberation, and messages

to and fro, this plan was decided on. Louis offered to provide ten thousand men to assist the King, but this James obstinately refused, saying he “would win through his subjects’ valour, or perish in the attempt.” Louis laughed at this empty boast, and gave ships, arms, and money, all the more willingly, I believe, that they helped to rid him of an expensive and troublesome guest. In parting he gave voice to his feelings by a wish that was well understood, namely, that the best thing he could wish was never to see his brother again.

Ronald accompanied the King, and full of hope and excitement, bade me a gay farewell. My baby lay in my arms as he did so, and when the last sound

of his departing steps ceased, God only knows the agony with which I laid my head upon the innocent little infant's breast and wept. A soldier's wife will understand my feelings as I lay following my husband in thought.

Week followed week, and then we heard of the terrible siege of Londonderry. The next news, however, was so inspiring, that the bells of Nôtre Dame rang a joy peal, and divine service was held to pray for success to their arms. Then, however, the Almighty showed His displeasure. Defeat after defeat harassed the King's arms, until the disastrous day of the Boyne, when his hope received its death blow; and ere many days were over, King James

returned to St. Germain, a broken-hearted, homeless man.

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I have little more to say. The days of my trial were past, and for many, many years, my husband and I lived in peaceful retirement, educating our two boys, and instilling into their young minds the seeds of virtue, truth, and honour.

But I have seen my brightest hopes decay. First my children were taken from me, both in one short year, and then my husband fell a victim to a complaint of long standing in his family, that fearful and fatal disease, consumption. I watched him fading from my side, with an agony only an experienced

one can judge of—and at last I was alone. God had given me joy and blessing beyond all things, and having let me taste the happiness, He had called them all away, to inherit eternal rest.

Reader, my tale is told, and the end and object of my telling it happily accomplished, if it has convinced one heart that, in this checkered world, our joys and griefs are pretty equally balanced, and that—as I said before—

“Every sorrow comes saddled with a blessing.”

THE END.

F. Shoberl, Printer, 37, Dean Street, Soho, W.

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